

MAY DAY IN ITALY DURING WORLD WAR I

The last May of peace

«Never before spring brought a Labor Day so radiant of gained victories and rekindled hopes»¹.

«From end to end of Italy... the solemn manifestation... marked a more advanced limit of the increasing political and social power of the proletariat. Forward, comrades of Italy! Within twelve months we will congratulate ourselves on the attainment of new stages of the ever increasing approach to the realisation of socialism»².

The last May Day of peace for Europe and international socialism — which will be lacerated in its unity within three months — happens in an atmosphere of confidence and optimism.

As a matter of fact, the state of the labor movement — the background of the Labor Day celebration in our country — offers support to those who express satisfaction. Two days before April 29, the Socialist party concluded its National Congress in Ancona. The picture presented in the political report of the secretary Costantino Lazari and in the financial one of Zerbini was very reassuring. Members had more than duplicated — from 28,689 in 1912 to 49,148 in 1914³; the party sections, now scattered over the whole national territory had multiplied⁴; the circulation of *Avanti!* had tripled; the authority of the «intransigente» (unmovable), revolutionary leadership was unchallenged, thanks to the successes of the years 1912-1914⁵.

From the Congress, therefore, emerged the image of a growing party⁶, renewed by a new generation of younger militants⁷, and enthusiastically projected towards new achievements⁸. Hence, the

hopes, the satisfaction expressed through the press and the propaganda, and in the celebration of May Day, which begins the day after the Congress ends. Besides the contrast between the optimism of April and May and the hard reality of the following months, this May Day of the last year of peace also offers other, more important suggestions to the historian.

May Day fully maintains the marks of a world designed to a swift disintegration, of an international socialism which will never be the same again; of the firm confidence in internationalism and in its effectiveness in defending peace⁹. This is therefore the necessary starting point for a history of May Day in the years of the Great War which intends to focus on this festival and its celebration as the privileged ground for a research on working class internationalism and on the difficult relations between internationalism and nationality, between country and class as they evolve during the traumatic experience of the war. Does a festival, in this case the May Day festival, answer such questions? Is it possible to study workers' internationalism through the history of a festival? On the basis of Mosse's splendid reconstruction of the German mentality through festivals, rites and ceremonies, and the strong suggestions of his book¹⁰. I shall try to provide an analysis of the diffusion and the character of internationalism in the Italian labor movement and of the relations between country and class as they existed in the collective imagery of the militants in the years of the Great War.

This explains both the choice of May Day, a moment expressing the internationalist vocation of the workers' movement,¹¹ and the delimitation to the years of the war, when internationalism had to confront nationalist feelings and hates. The choice was also suggested by other considerations connected with the complex and rich features of May Day.

May Day, in fact, is a political demonstration and a ceremony, a review of the workers' forces and a rite, a historically contingent event as well as a symbol without time¹². Therefore, this festival shares two different horizons, the political one and the ritual one, and through its ambivalence it offers the historian the possibility to study the level of historical events as well as that of collective behavior. We think that an inquiry about internationalism through the lens of the «Holy Day of Labor» has to proceed along two different and complementary guidelines. On the one hand, through the study of official documents, party and trade union posters, the press, editorials

signed by prestigious leaders, we shall follow the development of the theoretical debate which often makes important steps forward on the occasion of this celebration. On the other hand, through the reportages on the meetings and on the celebration, dramas, poems, and the ichonographic material — including medals, badges, post-cards ¹³ — we intend to identify the way in which the militants put in practice their ideas and values and translated them into collective images and behaviors. Our research on the «War Mays» will proceed along this double direction by choosing as a starting point the First of May of 1914, because of its «emblematicism» and the useful information which the last May of peace gives us about the diffusion and the strength of internationalism in the Italian workers' movement.

Which are therefore the predominant and unifying themes of May 1914?

If we glance through *Avanti!*, *Critica Sociale*, the single-iusses ¹⁴, the posters and the reports of speeches it is easy to find that they echo the discussions and the congressional resolutions — i.e., the confirmation of the «intransigente» line ¹⁵, the rejection of the blocks, the condemnation of Freemasonry ¹⁶, the approval of Mussolini and the political line of *Avanti!* ¹⁷.

Often, epic memories of the origins of the party ¹⁸, tales of first May Days, the deep-felt history of twenty years of Italian and international socialism, poems, hymns dedicated to this «fateful day», to the «holy Easter of proletariat's deliverance» are intertwined together in the same article ¹⁹.

But beyond the political contingent analysis and the memories, this May day is without doubt the May of anti-militarism, of pacifism and socialist internationalism.

In fact, May Day which was born «against the background of... a strategy of socialism (italics added) which unites peace and revolution and identifies in the first the essential condition to realize the second ²⁰ has asumed year after year the form of a real demonstration for peace» ²¹. Therefore, in the collective experiences of thousands of militants, May Day is turning into an Easter of deliverance: the holy day of proletarian emancipation, but also a «beloved symbol of peace» ²², the prefiguration of a new world of universal brotherhood and individual prosperity. And together with pacifism is internationalism, the old aspiration of the international proletarian movements, solemnly reaffirmed through the setting up of May Day.

«A demonstration will be organized in the same day in all countries and in all cities»²³.

That was the resolution proposed by Raymond Lavigne during the Second International Meeting of 1889 in Paris, the birth certificate of May Day. Internationalism is a constituent part of the very identity of May Day, which, faithful to the spirit of its origins through ceremonies, symbols, «myths», shall be the high moment of an internationalist vocation and at the same time a channel to convey it into the conscience and the experience of thousands of militants²⁴.

Finally, there is anti-militarism, chosen by international socialism as the preferential terrain for a concrete action against the war, even though European socialist parties and youth movements had dissimilar strategies during the period between the end of XIX century and the First World War²⁵.

The first of May of 1914 resumes therefore «old» and classic motifs, but with an urgency and a dramatic force which testifies to the worries about peace stirred up by the recurring international crisis²⁶.

That's why in *Avanti!*, *Internazionale*, the single-issues, the provincial Federations papers²⁷, the posters, a condemnation is expressed against the incessant military expenses and against the army, «a means of destruction not of production»²⁸, which steals from the State Budget the funds necessary to the works of peace, the social reforms, the sacrosanct workers' aspirations²⁹. That's why they violently attacked *le compagnie di disciplina*, praised the comrades Moroni e Masetti³⁰, and rejected the colonial adventure — the war of Libya — as an arrogant contrast between the socialist ideals of peace and universal fraternity and militarist and warmongering capitalism³¹. The very iconography of May Day dwells on the same themes. *Avanti!*, for instance, carries a Scalarini cartoon representing a warlike looking soldier holding a sword. Behind him is a gun and facing him a poor little worker.

Above the image, a written commentary: «*The folly of armament: 164 billion and 800 million*». Again in the Party organ the *Avanti!*, machines attack the capitalist fortress and open a breach into one of its foundations: militarism³².

But together with the classic motifs and images of pacifism and anti-militarism³³, May Day 1914 proposes the reflections and the analysis of Claudio Treves and Silvano Fasulo on the links between the inconsiderate development of militarism, colonialism, nationalism

and the prevailing of imperialist factions in European capitalism. «Undoubtedly, the huge weight of armaments in Europe answers some needs of foreign policy, in connection with the triumph of the imperialist factions in the various States, which seek greedily large and risky investments in the colonial countries, stirring up the international jealousy between States». This quotation from the Ancona Congress report on *The problem of armaments and the action of the international movement* was integrally published in the *Avanti!* of the first of April and reprinted by *Il Riscatto*, a May Day single-issue³⁴.

In *The May Day of the New Century*, Claudio Treves also reflects on the incompatibility between war and socialism. «Socialists are against the war... because the war arouses the nationalist spirits and lessens the meaning of class»³⁵. These documents are of great interest because they connect the first of May of 1914 with the internal debate of the Second International on the theme of peace and war³⁶ and at the same time anticipate motifs and images which will have a large diffusion in the following years.

But what is the physiognomy of antimilitarism, pacifism, internationalism in the experience and the collective imagery of socialist militants judging from the press, the propaganda and the iconography of the celebration of this last May of peace? If, within a common aspiration for peace and solidarity among all peoples, antimilitarism is practiced through concrete initiatives of agitation and struggle — consider the popular mobilization against the disciplinary companies which, a few months later after May Day 1914 led to the «red week», internationalism lives mainly on images, rites, symbols. We cannot forget, for sure, the activity of the «Bureau Socialiste International» in defence of peace or the autonomous initiatives of English, German, French, Italian and Austrian proletarians against the chauvinism and militarism of the middle-classes on the occasion of the recurring international crisis³⁷. The *Avanti!* of the First of May, for instance, carries on the third page an article of Emile Vandervelde proudly outlining the positions taken by the B.S.I. about the autonomy of Poland or Alsace-Lorraine and the struggle against the brutal policy in Morocco, Libya, Asia Minor³⁸. In the report by Claudio Treves and Silvano Fasulo, the two authors review the stages of «internationalism in action» and celebrate its most mature moment in the Basel Meeting of 1912³⁹. But if we move from the articles to the accounts of the festivals, from internationalism as an object of political reflection to internationalism as a practice carried out by militants, we find

not mass actions but symbolic gestures and lyric images. There is a frequent call to the acclamations generously rendered to Ellenbogen and Skatula, the delegates of the Austrian and Bohemian socialist parties at the Ancona Congress as a big proof of internationalism⁴⁰. There is the frequent evocation of a thousand red flags waving over the frontiers in the name of socialism, of «the hardened hands of our brothers outstretched towards us, of the millions of children of *every country* (italics added) singing the anthems of peace»⁴¹.

In this collective imagery, internationalism is not a mass mobilization on an international level, but an ideal, a dream, part of the mythical world socialism will create in a far-off-day. Which is the place of the Nation in this ideal horizon? What place does this First of May of pacifism, antimilitarism and internationalism give to the national question? Again on this theme as well the research has to be carried out at two levels, one of reflection and the other of collective attitudes. As for the first, there is a lot of interesting information available. In his quoted report, Claudio Treves, referring to the false patriotism of some nationalists on the payroll of the big military industry, speaks of the compatibility between internationalism and «real patriotism», and mentions the grave risks of an erroneous contrast between international socialist action and love for one's country. «Since radical internationalism and anti-militarism are perfectly compatible with real and noble patriotism it is stupid to let patriotism drift against us, since that amounts to putting it into the hands of the cynical and desacrating exploiter of nationalism⁴². For Claudio Treves these premises imply the need for a replanning of the anti-militarist action of the B.S.I. — of which he denounced accurately the limits and the abstractness — in the sense of a simultaneous involvement through the international Trade Federations, the proletariat of different countries and a capillary information network for the purpose of reassuring the popular classes on the contemporaneousness of the action «to eliminate all the worries that the movement may weaken a Country in favour of another one».

On the contrary Paolo Mantica, on the *Internazionale*, confirms the downright and incompatible contrast between class and nation, patriotism and internationalism, democracy and syndicalism and he goes so far as to refuse to a militant syndicalist the possibility of «patriotic feeling».

«How is it possible to perform an action provoked at the same time by a national and... a social community? By a class and a coun-

try? Democracy is a collective national action... and it makes impossible to conceive of the social classes. Syndicalism is the collective action of the working class against the capitalist class and therefore it doesn't conceive a national solidarity in action. A syndicalist who should take up arms in an outburst of patriotism would immediately stop belonging to the revolutionary community to enter the patriotic community»⁴³. The analysis of the reports about the manifestations show the reduction of the place and attention reserved to patriotic feelings. We shall give some examples. During the Mantua May Day Meeting on «Socialism and Irredentism» he was invited to hold, the Hon. Tedeschini was attacked by members of the *Trento e Trieste Association*, but he received a warm welcome and a proof of esteem and affection from other people⁴⁴. In those days he had become the target of violent press criticisms because of his activity in favour of the socialists of different countries in Trieste⁴⁵. In Rovigo, an engagement between the students of the *Trento e Trieste Association* and a group of young socialists during the May Day celebration became a big demonstration of internationalism⁴⁶. The rank-and-file seemed quite immune from patriotic feelings. The Homeland is perceived as a distant, extraneous and hostile reality⁴⁷, surpassed by a bigger and wider ideal.

Internationalism transcends values, draws the outlines of a better world on which people project hopes, aspirations and dreams. The First of May, the international anniversary of the labor movement, is the symbolic place where, only for one day, those aspirations and dreams take shape. Consequently, there is no room for the Country in May Day.

Now some final reflections for the celebration of the last May Day of peace. From the very small towns of the South to the big working class centers of the North the celebration of the anniversary follows precise ritual stages, The abstention from work, the meeting of the militants or of the delegates from the different neighborhood organizations at the party office, the «Casa del Popolo», with banners and flags; the speech and the procession. And then the outings to the country, the picnics or the community banquets, the games, the raffles, the dances in which women and children take part⁴⁸. The procession is the most important moment of the day. It is followed or preceded by the speech: «The procession took place... the compact column advanced majestically, slowly, to the sound of the "Inno dei lavoratori" and of The International».

« The many red flags waving in the wind and the rain, gave to the procession a fantastic appearance. It was a big, serious, and imposing demonstration. Passing through Piazza del Duomo, Largo Cairoli, Foro Bonaparte, the procession reached the Arena; at the two sides there were the cordons of "carabinieri", while plain-clothes policemen wearing a red carnation in their buttonhole "contaminated" the manifestation»⁴⁹. The solemn walk of the slowly advancing men, the waving of the flags, the notes of the workers' anthems resounding in the silence, the physical occupation of the squares, the downtown streets generally reserved to the activities and recreations of the middle-class, give the procession not only the appearance of a political manifestation, a demonstration of force, a warning to the adversaries, but also, and overall, the plastic image of a new humanity advancing and growing under the protection of socialism. The collective festiveness together with the political and symbolic gestures, the pro-*Avanti!* collections for the striking comrades, the display of the symbols of a common faith — badges, emblems, red carnations — become not only an opportunity for aggregation and socialization but also a «sign» of a collective identity which expresses itself through common behaviors, values and symbols. And if the «festival», its success, its «taking roots» in the collective feelings tell of the existence of an organic community, this last May Day of peace offers us the image of a world of hopes, dreams, ideals, a world sure of its future and of its force.

«Forward!, comrades of Italy... within twelve months we will be together again! ». Instead, within ninety days, that world, that generous illusion, was to collapse under the strokes of an unexpected and terrible tragedy.

A May of sorrow and faith

«Is it really possible that only a year ago... in 1914, the responsible proletariat of all countries hailed the First of May as the symbol of his hope in a new humanity...? Then, in the name of socialism, people swore faithfulness to international solidarity and now eight peoples exterminate one another»⁵⁰. Then... now. Between these two extremes the betrayals of German socialists and the «unions sacrées», and nine terrible months of war. For international socialism the First of May of 1915, is the May of the division, the crisis, the

failure of internationalism. The celebrations bear the signs of the defeat and the wounds. In Germany, in the days before the event, party leaders exhorted their members not to stop working «pour les circonstances particulières». This directive published on the official paper of the German Social Democratic Party, arouses Grigorij Zinoviev's indignation. He writes in the *Sozialdemokrat*: «Twenty five years have gone by and in the name of bourgeoisie in social peace the most powerful social democratic party exhorts workers to abstain from the First of May! It is a symbol! It is a crime bigger than the bombardment of Reims cathedral! It is the apogee of the profanation of the socialist flag». ⁵¹ With no refrain from work, with the prohibition of speeches, processions and official celebrations, the First of May is no more the traditional workers' festival. Only the left-wing minorities, collected around Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxembourg, the same who in December voted against the war credits, confirm in this May Day their internationalist faith and hand out leaflets against the war ⁵².

The situation is different in France. There, the opposition against the war, which was started right away in the CGT by Monatte, Merreheim — the secretary of the Fédération des Métaux — and a few others ⁵³, takes the opportunity of May Day to express itself clamorously. Thus, on the occasion of the meeting organized by the «Union des Syndicats de la Seine» at the «Maison des Syndicats» on May Day evening, Brisson, the temporary secretary of the «Fédération des Métaux», reads an order of the day — and has it voted among the shouting of political rivals — for the beginning of an immediate international action against the war.

The order of day gets about a hundred votes. Furthermore the «Fédération» prints a special issue of its formerly suspended organ, the *Union des Métaux* ⁵⁴. This issue, which makes a big stir, carries the call of Karl Liebknecht, Clara Zetkin, and Rosa Luxemburg to the workers of all countries asking for immediate peace and expresses its solidarity to this call, which had been published on April 1, 1915 by the *Labour Leader*, the organ of the Independent Labour Party ⁵⁵. The First of May of the «union sacrée» opposes the internationalist one. In the *Humanité*, Vaillant declares that no manifestation of the First of May should be possible in France except «celle de notre volonté résolue de la victoire totale». The official poster of the administrative committee of the Party remembers the comrades at the front with these words: «C'est pour notre idéal commun qu'ils luttent et se sacrifient en ce moment aux frontières. C'est en vue de

la même émancipation ouvrière et humaine qu'ils combattent pour délivrer des prises de l'agresseur la France du Nord et la Belgique»⁵⁶. And in the name of this sacrifice no halt to work is called. In Russia, instead May Day maintains and reinforces its old struggle attitude. There the socialist anti-war opposition had been strong and resolute from the beginning. At the outbreak of war the Central Bolshevik Committee of the Russian Social Democratic Party denounced in a manifesto the imperialist nature of the war and social-patriotic choices of European socialist parties. Seeing the failure of the Second International, the Party asked for a Third International «libérée des opportunistes et des traitres»⁵⁷. At the same time, the socialist section of the Duma voted against the war credits and the Petrograd Committee organized worker's manifestations against mobilization. The very hard reaction, the arrests, the deportations to Siberia of socialist militants and members of the Duma, the suppressions of the press do not break an opposition which feeds on this violence and, day by day, becomes more resolute. Therefore, agitations and the circulation of leaflets happen amid arrests and persecutions. In this climate the First of May does not go unobserved. The Petrograd Committee calls for the strike: 35,000 workers take part in the demonstration; 300 are arrested⁵⁸. The Bund begins also to speak up. On the occasion of the «holy date» of proletarian internationalism it makes an appeal confirming its stand against the war and its loyalty to internationalism, condemning those who defend the homeland and auspicing the absolute independence of the international proletariat in the struggle «contre les gouvernements, contre le capital et contre le nationalisme»⁵⁹. It is a divided and tormented May Day, as divided as international socialism. The celebration of May Day in Italy has this crisis in its background, but in our country the situation during that difficult spring of 1915 is anomalous. Italy in fact, even though torn apart by the clash for and against the intervention⁶⁰, is still out of the war⁶¹. The Socialist Party and the labor organizations, notwithstanding their crisis and their internal defections⁶², are firm in the condemnation of war and in the loyalty towards the International; the proletarian and rural rank-and-file side with neutralism, with strongly anti-militarist and pacifist positions. Therefore, the May Day of Italian socialism is against war. But it is also deeply marked by the collapse of the International and by the growth of nationalist feelings and hatred among workers internationally: «There are no festivals to day... Nobody wants to celebrate. Too much blood, too many mournings»⁶³.

«The cannon thunders from the shores of the cold and stormy north seas to the calm and peaceful south seas. Everywhere death, sorrow and ruins! The proletarians fight one against the other, shattering the hopes of the International... And they kill»⁶⁴. «After this terrible and dolorous disappointment what does May Day mean to us? An atrocious defeat»⁶⁵. This dramatic language confirms the deep rooting of the workers' festival in the collective affectivity of the militants and it marks also the serious rending of its identity, due to the war. But if the bewilderment is great, also great is the willingness to understand and to explain. Therefore, this First of May becomes a customary opportunity to ponder on the causes of the war, the collapse of the Second International, the connections between socialism and war, internationalism and nation, and on the new paths to follow to come out of the crisis and reunite the International. Through these considerations the May Day of Italian socialism expresses the anguish which has torn against the Party and the workers' movement since August 1914, opposing neutralists and interventionists and, among them, absolute neutralists and relative ones, democratic interventionists and revolutionary ones. It draws also on the debate on the limits and the mistakes of the Second International, opened by the war in European socialism. The First of May of the interventionist, syndicalist *Internazionale*, organ of the Camera del lavoro of Parma, is quite different from the First of May of *Critica Sociale* or *Avanti!* The choices of syndicalism, reformism, and intransigence were ripening before the hard problems aroused from the war: «We did not want the war... but the Destroyer came... We went out of the shell of a comfortable and formal cohesion... to prevent the triumph of Teutonic barbarism. From this day the International will revive, as a sincere part of union between the workers of all the countries based on the corner stone... of equality for all the national groups»⁶⁶.

The May Day *Internazionale* reads the war according to De Ambris, Corridoni, and other Italian syndicalists⁶⁷ as a struggle of civilization against German militarism, a struggle where national defence unites with revolution, homeland with socialism. The Commune and the glorious battle fought by the French defending their fatherland and freedom are the ideals: «Today as well as then... the French people stand up... the revolutionaries run to the trenches»⁶⁸. Here the internationalism of the International, defeated by German betrayal, gives place to an internationalism of fatherlands which is

cementing of the battle field against the common enemy. «Did internationalism die, comrade Hervé? Don't say it, you are denying history, offending the liberating spirit of the children of so many far countries who are struggling, dying, and fighting against the enemy of humanity: *German militarism* (italics added). After the killing of the monster... the International shall become a giant. The International, my friend, is now fighting its vital battle»⁶⁹. The war therefore becomes an ideal, revolutionary struggle; a new and stronger internationalism will flow from war, based on the acknowledgment and acceptance of the national values. As a consequence, then, comes the anathema against the Socialist Party which, by denying any ideal value to the war, — «a game in the interest of, and only to the sole advantage of the owners» — urges thousand of proletarians to be sent to the front without hopes or moral beliefs⁷⁰. This is a complete turn about as regards the contraposition democracy-syndicalism, and class-nation, presented on the same columns a year before by Paolo Mantica. And yet, after all, it registers the overturning of positions produced by the war in an important part of the Italian syndicalism by interlacing voluntarism, Francophile spirit and rediscovery of national values. The May Day editorial of *Critica Sociale* is very different. It is written by Claudio Treves, as are all the May Day editorials of the years of war. Here the contraposition between civilization and Teutonic barbarism gives place to a research which identifies the forces which swept away peace in the «violent world-wide competition of the capitalist imperialism... in the excessive power of the bureaucratic, military and dynastic classes... in the manifest lie of the liberal national middle-class ideology»⁷¹.

Behind this explanation of war and its causes, is the bitter recognition of the imperialist degeneration of Italian and international capitalism and of the crisis of that project of a social alliance between the modern bourgeoisie and the proletariat in a common hypothesis of transformation, which Italian reformism had sustained for many years⁷². But beyond these considerations, the whole article of Treves revolves around some very important problematic points: the socialism-internationalism connection, the class-nation clash, the future of socialism. For Treves, the failure of internationalism is the failure of socialism. The breaking off of class solidarity in the name of a national spirit, seems to him the triumph of the particular over the universal, of individualism over a system of values that surpass the individual. «If we destroy the man, every universal

falls broken under the strokes of civic particularism: the stranger is again an enemy, a spy... The barbarism of individualism, disguised under a national image, celebrates its Saturnalia... Why then, oh May Day dawn, are you raising this year if you are bringing only a dead rite, a symbol without any meaning? »⁷³.

It is as sad and painful to acknowledge a defeat now as its prediction was precise a year before⁷⁴. So, even if the faith in the ultimate triumph of internationalism and socialism is «torn to pieces» but confirmed by this conflict; even if «this painful and bloody First of May brings forth *anyway (italics added)* the announcement of a sure redemption»⁷⁵, as far as Treves is concerned, the point which is still without solution is that of the difficult relationship between internationalism and patriotism, class and country, socialism and nation. For the *Critica Sociale*, the First of May is a day of faith, which is internationalistic and peaceful, but which also refuses the clear-cut counterpositions, the easy and liberating fixed patterns, a First of May which is looking for a new definition, holding on strongly to its traditions, but keen on the questions which are posed to internationalist socialism by the new and dramatic reality of the war. These problems are also present in *Avanti!* or in the May Day single issues put out by the various sections, federations and leagues. In their articles then is the consciousness of a May of mourning, of pain, of suffering; the torment for the crisis of internationalism, reflections on the limits and mistakes of the Second International⁷⁶, the searching for an answer to the difficult problem of the relationship between internationalism and nation, and between socialism and country. On this subject, different considerations are printed, which are often in opposition. Nicola Barbato⁷⁷ for example, while giving credit to the generosity and beauty of individual action⁷⁸, claims as the purpose of the party and of socialism to go well beyond sentimental and patriotic fights⁷⁹. He speaks against the aestheticism of a patriotism which rests on the beautiful gesture and he is also against mixing heroic patriotism and greedy nationalism⁸⁰.

Of a different opinion is Riccardo Roberto⁸¹, who in his article *I senza patria* gives a painful explanation of the bitter anti-patriotism of the Italian working class, which is kept at the margins of national life: a target for the fratricidal bullets every time it was forced by hunger and misery to demonstrate in the streets: a working class that was praised and flattered only when the country needed «little gray soldiers» for acts of brigandage in a foreign country⁸². This is the

evidence of a clear-cut separation between the working class and the country, a separation which has its roots in the class injustice of bourgeois society ⁸³.

But in both of these interpretations the hypothesis is avoided of having to defend the country, not yet necessary in Italy. Riccardo Roberto makes a passing but significant reference to it: «... The day when... someone should try to sink down in the waves of a military conquest, this... solidarity... which links us to the home... of our fathers... on that day *the event* will be stronger than the conscience» ⁸⁴. It is of great interest the reflection of Arturo Caroti ⁸⁵ on the difficulties present in the relationship between democracy and socialism, reform and revolution, and the nationalization of the masses and the internationalism of class. According to his analysis the growth of advanced capitalism, of political democracy and of economic reformism in countries of old industrial traditions, such as England, France, and in many ways Germany, have in reality created the suitable conditions for a national process of integration of the lower classes. A process which, once the war broke out, expressed itself in a ready solidarity of the socialists to national defence, in the unions sacrées between working class and bourgeoisie which went far beyond any previous internationalism.

Only «nations that aren't yet capitalistic and democratic» such as Russia and Serbia or countries such as Italy, where a «blind, indifferent, misoneistic» ⁸⁶ bourgeoisie has, with its politics, hindered more than encouraged the national integration of the lower classes, only these nations, then, proved to have no aptitude for any kind of national blending. Moving from these preliminary statements, Caroti outlines various scenarios for the after-war days. Regardless of what the results of the conflict could be, the presence of losers and winners; the meddling of the State in the economy; the most advanced reform politics, as a recognition by the countries that won to the contribution of the blood shed by their workers in the fighting; the desire for revenge in the countries that lost will bind even more closely the lower classes to the nation.

Therefore, the future might mark the triumph of reformism and a further dilating of the subversive mind of the working class with a process of nationalization and this, of course, would freeze the relationship among the classes and would mark the ultimate defeat of socialism as a subversive force. Against this gloomy prospect for the revolution, Caroti sets up a strategy that, being aware of the danger

and playing on those forces that are still «pure from any contacts», operates towards «an active reconciliation» of the socialist forces in the belligerent countries and that, taking advantage of the economic hardships and of the social general uneasiness due to the war, is capable of keeping the masses from «falling into» the national-reformism trap: «We'll have to say it over and over again that the worker belongs to his class and not to the nation. The Party... will suffer a loss... in number but will gain strength»⁸⁷. For *Avanti!* then, the First of May offers various answers to the problem of the relationship between socialism and national question, class and country: from subordinating the mocking and «sentimental» patriotism to the high ideals of international solidarity — a position which is very close to Treves's line of thinking and to reformism; to a hervéism that is a bitter grudge against a country that is «a step-mother» and not a mother; to a class internationalism which foresees in the national integration of the lower classes the danger of the working class losing all its leading and revolutionary abilities. Therefore, the debate is also a clear indication of the seriousness of the «break» which has taken place within the parts and, at the same time, lays out different routes and ways, that are still glued together by the «common» faith but are nevertheless divergent. Much stronger and univocal is the image of the First of May that is brought up by the accounts of this event at the local level, by the results of the political meetings, by the general behavior, by the iconography. From these documents emerges a May Day that is instinctively anti-militaristic, internationalist and anti-patriotic; that keeps quite vivid the memory of the Libyan war with its heavy consequences on the workers' life conditions; that exposes the efforts of the reactionary Italian bourgeoisie to weaken and defeat socialism. The attempt of the Salandra government to prohibit public demonstrations during the workers' holiday gives the celebration itself a new zeal. Thus, the provincial federations of the Party and the «Camera del lavoro» take up the promotion of joint demonstrations, in order to muster strength, to avoid divisions and to give the demonstrations a more solemn tone⁸⁸.

The results go beyond any expectation. Everywhere there were «impressive» processions, «total» abstention from work, a strong public support. In Turin, the demonstration takes on an aspect which is «exceptional and never seen before»⁸⁹. Through the streets of the city over 100,000 people march on a parade «while the International is played»: «... the red flags shimmering red in the sun... big posters

with slogans against the war... the chorus "Come, oh May" sung by the students of the Borgo San Paolo's schools»⁹⁰. In Bologna, after a «grand» political meeting at the Teatro Comunale⁹¹ the celebration continues with a party for children at the Margherita Gardens⁹² organized in the afternoon together with the «red» city officials⁹³.

At the end of it, «groups of young boys and girls marched through the city singing subversive anthems stirring up surprise and scandal among the well-thinking people»⁹⁴. Also great were the demonstrations that took place in Florence, Venice, Rome, and in tens of other cities and towns of Italy⁹⁵. The *Avanti!*, of May 3rd is full of news. At the end of the second page, the editorial staff notices that: «... The amount of letters and telegrams... is enormous... The number of political meetings is impressive...»⁹⁶. Even in the South there is a strong public support to this First of May. Despatches from Puglia, Campania and Sicily bring the echo of demonstrations where the cries for peace, against the blameworthy war, and for loyalty to the international working class overlap with those against unemployment, Salandra's «reactionary» government, and the everlasting violence against the defenceless farmers and working class⁹⁷. The iconography, as well, proves and reinforces the old image of this First of May. Socialism is pictured as defending life, justice, human rights and as being against death, sufferings and violence.

A socialist and internationalist Italy stands up as a bearer of peace among a working class that is temporarily divided. The recent internationalist action of Italian socialism aimed at the strengthening of the International is emphasized⁹⁸. The war is seen as a serious but only temporary obstacle to the slow but inevitable progress of the working class⁹⁹.

This is not equal to saying that the celebration happened in total unity, that an unmistakably neutralist determination was there, that it had a real effectiveness. In the celebration there were differences of opinion between neutralists and interventionists; controversial¹⁰⁰ and even opposing ideas¹⁰¹, and separate demonstrations. It is sufficient to mention what has happened in Milan, where the most shocking divisions have taken place, starting with the interventionist turn of De Ambris and Corridoni, and ending with the Mussolini case. The disunity leads to two different celebrations: a socialist one, with the speech of the Hon. Mazzoni at the «Teatro del Popolo»¹⁰², and another one with the speech given by Corridoni, Bacchi and other

interventionist trade-unionists in the courtyard of the Milanese office of the *Unione Sindacale Italiana* ¹⁰³.

Such a divided celebration cuts in two halves the economic organizations. Quite typical is the case of the tram-drivers, split between the neutralist *Camera del Lavoro* and the interventionist *Unione Sindacale* and therefore participating in two different celebrations ¹⁰⁴. But the divisions do not change the physiognomy of this First of May of Italian socialism, a day of sorrow and faith when the fact itself of wanting to re-propose, among so much pain and mourning, such happy events as banquets, country excursions, evenings out, and dancing, it's not to be considered as a way of avoiding the issues but as an example of that everlasting loyalty of the Italian working class to its «sacred principles» and to its very identity. «When people meet in every corner of Italy by the thousands to openly assert their allegiance to the International, to express their hopes in the social claims, to let people know that their class is different from the others... and above all to curse that war which is used as a means for strengthening the bourgeoisie, when, most of all, the Italian working-class was able to celebrate even in this particular moment *its First of May*, we can well say that... socialism is still in the heart and in the mind of Italian workers regardless of where men's wickedness may lead our country» ¹⁰⁵.

A May of hope

If May of 1915 had meant for Italian socialism the painful realization of the «break» in the international unity of the labour movement but also, at the same time, the re-assertion of loyalty to the «sacred principles», the First of May of 1916 indicated the rebirth of hope. That did not imply the end of the mourning caused by the «dreadful slaughter of people» or of the bitter sensation and bewilderment due to the crisis of socialist internationalism. On the contrary, Italian participation in the war made that mourning and that bewilderment even more felt.

Thus, this May Day is also full of sorrow and dismay: it, too, has lost the joy, the cheerfulness of by-gone days in order to withdraw into a «thoughtful concentration» ¹⁰⁶. This May Day as well as the previous one, and maybe even more, is a ritual occasion to celebrate the religion of the «dear reminiscences» ¹⁰⁷, to look for affirmation

and strength for the future in the «heroic months of May», to express, very often in a true note of lyricism, regret and yearning¹⁰⁸ for a past of fighting. It is as beautiful in the memory as it is hard and cruel in the present: «Sad dawn of May... what cruel contrast you offer us this year»¹⁰⁹ «How big is our yearning desire for the First of May celebration of by-gone days! And how much does our soul yearn for the cheerful meetings of the workers' families in the sweet-smelling meadows, where the children with their laughter brought a gay and gentle note»¹¹⁰. Mourning, pain, reminiscences, yearning; but also the rebirth of hope, of faith that assert itself in the reality of things¹¹¹. In fact, war has been raging over Europe for two years. Millions of men are stuck in the trenches¹¹². To the horrible reality of those who are dead and wounded on the fighting fields, the hardships, the suffering, the difficulties of the «home front» are added. Everywhere, among European populations, a dull and growing dissatisfaction grows, in all countries there is a resumption, more or less intense, of struggles and agitations. In England, to give an example, what was at the beginning an acceptance of the war that led, after the first months of fighting, to a massive and voluntary participation by the working-class, soon turned into a hardly concealed intolerance due to the restriction on human rights and trade-union freedom¹¹³. Because of this, starting from February 1915, the workers of the Clyde shipyards demonstrate in the streets and, in August, the same thing happened with the coal-miners in Wales, while at the same time there are more and more cases of «silent resistance» against the high cost of living, the wage freeze, the abuses¹¹⁴. In France as well, where the illusion of a quick ending of the war and the firm belief of a «just war» were stronger and harder to die¹¹⁵, the last months of 1915 there is a resumption of agitations. Among the first groups of workers that demonstrate in the streets there are the Parisian tailors and dressmakers who, backed up by the «Syndicat de l'Habillement» start a long agitation that will last until the spring of 1916. During these same months, again in Paris, there is a 48-hour strike led by the «Syndicat des ferblantiers» (household furnitures) and supported by the «Federation des Métaux» and an agitation asking for a raise in salaries started by the «Syndicat général des terrassiers de la Seine», a powerful and ready-to-fight unskilled workers' organization¹¹⁶.

Agitations and tensions are also present in Germany, where the first women's demonstrations against the high cost of living and against

the scarceness of commodities happened already in 1915 ¹¹⁷ and in Austria, where in the years 1914-1916 there is a downfall in the number of party and trade-union members, since these two organizations, in the name of social peace, had accepted the war. This is a clear indication of a growing disagreement with their choice, which hit the working-class hard not only as far as the loss of human lives was concerned, but even more because of the general worsening of life conditions and working possibilities in the country ¹¹⁸.

The agitations in Italy were numerous and deeply-felt. In this country people's opposition to the war, the pacifism, the internationalism of which May Day of 1915 had been clear evidence, had gained renewed energy from the way the war was conducted ¹¹⁹, from the unpreparedness and improvidence of the high military commanders who during the fall and the winter of 1915, had sent to the front the badly and sparsely equipped Italian infantrymen according to a ridiculous strategy of subsequent waves which left on the fields of the «Isonzo» and of the «Trentino» thousands of unnecessary victims ¹²⁰; from the improvisation of a political assistance in the internal affairs which was of very little use against speculative hoarding, the black market, the high cost of commodities. Therefore the «sacred enthusiasm» that in the days following the beginning of the war had gained little approval among the soldiers who were about to leave and among the lower class ¹²¹, had soon been overwhelmed by the growing wave of discomfort, discouragement, and rebellion which ran from the front to the nation and back again as if through communicating vessels ¹²².

At the same time, the prompt adoption for restrictive measures of political and trade-union freedom ¹²³ was clear evidence of class distinction in favor of the interventionists. Therefore, after a period of confusion, following the loss of members and leaders sent to the front line, the working-class organizations gained new strength; the leagues, the Camere del Lavoro, the local sections began slowly to function again.

The May Day single-issue papers are evidence of this recovery, even if at its very beginning stage. *Lotta Operaia*, a single issue of Sestri Ponente's Camera del Lavoro, gives news of an agitation among the metal and mechanical workers in the San Giorgio factory in order to gain a raise in salaries. The agitation lasted three months and ended in victory ¹²⁴. In the same article there is news of agitations in the Ferriere Bruzzo and the Accaierie Italiane in Bolzaneto; of new adhe-

sions to the Sindacato Metallurgico; of the foundation of new trade unions and leagues, and of their entry into the Camera del Lavoro; of the regular fundraising for the press ¹²⁵. The papers of the provincial Federations report the activities of the sections, the birth of youth clubs ¹²⁶, large recruiting among the new generation and among women, a general «rebirth» of working-class' militancy. There are the «symptoms» of a tension, of a «heaping up of revolutionary potential» ¹²⁷ that are meant for a progressive growth in the months and years to come.

But aside from the agitational activity of the trade-unions, the First of May of 1916 tells of the resumption of the internationalist action on a European scale. May Day glitters with the «light» of Zimmerwald and Kienthal, under whose flags what had been the scattered forces of the working-class movement loyal to anti-militarism and internationalism reorganize ¹²⁸. That of 1916 is a May Day still suffering, but no longer defeated and «having no say in the matter». In France, in Germany, this working-class festivity has regained partially its strength, its militancy.

On April 30th in Kienthal, the Second International Conference ended. The manifesto issued in that occasion was given the date of May 1st ¹²⁹. It launches to «the people that are ruined and killed» a call to fight «to impose a peace with no annexations» ¹³⁰. In Germany, 10,000 people take part in a demonstration in the Potsdamer Platz in Berlin, shouting «Down with the war! Down with the government» ¹³¹. The immediate arrest of Karl Liebknecht, and the trial that followed after a few days, will give him a fame that spread far and wide. From that moment on, Liebknecht becomes for the whole of Europe the symbol of the fight against the war. In France aside from the special issue of the *Federation des Métaux*, which quotes long passages of the *Independent Labour Party's* appeal to the workers to put pressure on national governments in order to get an immediate peace ¹³², the First of May of 1916 witnesses the publication of the first issue of *Le Populaire*, a weekly paper published by the socialist party minority ¹³³. At the same time, at the Congress of the trade-unions of the Seine, which was held in occasion of the workers' festivity, Tonneliers' motion to oppose the official of the CGT got a strong approval ¹³⁴.

From Gustavo Sacerdote, the *Avanti!* foreign correspondent, we learn also of 19 political rallies held on May Day in the city of Vienna alone; we learn of «numerous rallies on the subject of the First

of May all over the rest of Austria»¹³⁵; of a «wonderful march... at least five kilometers long» in Zurich with the participation of Russians, Austrians, Hungarians, Italians, Germans, all praising Zimmerwald and the International¹³⁶.

News of strikes and of propaganda activities in favor of the eight-hour working day, of international solidarity, and of the III International, come from Russia, most of all from Petrograd¹³⁷. The *Bureau Socialist International*, as well, raises its voice in occasion of this May Day. In a poster it strongly blames «the impatient comrades who did not hesitate to walk over the heads of the existing parties»¹³⁸ and, summing up the activities undertaken by the leaders of the II International during those months, it concludes by expressing its hope of having again «a working-class' unity of action» as soon as possible. This manifesto is an important step in the strategy used by the International to prevent the antiwar forces to go towards a left-wing loyal to Zimmerwald and, at the same time, it is an attempt to establish again, thanks to new activities, its leadership. In Italy, this May Day of war, goes by in a «real wonderful way»¹³⁹. In our country, as the festivity came closer and closer, there was the beginning of a hard strong-arm situation between the Salandra government and the workers' organizations. The leaders of the party had answered to the prohibition to celebrate with marches and speeches by encouraging the various sections and the Camere del Lavoro to organize private political meetings so as to be able to give this festivity «an undeniable and vast resonance», anyway¹⁴⁰. In order to get around the censorship it was decided to send the text of CGDL and of PSI's May Day poster to the sections and the Federations who would take care directly of having it printed and given out¹⁴¹. This same method was used with Kienthal's decisions and manifesto. More than 100,000 copies of them were printed and were given out by party members¹⁴². The Executive of the party also called for a general abstention from work and advised socialist city officials, who govern many Italian towns, to «agree with and promote» the demonstration in every possible way¹⁴³. Finally, regardless of any censorship, a wonderful May Day issue in *Avanti!* is printed that devotes a whole page to the *Apostles and soldiers of the Socialist International*, from Jean Jaurés to Karl Liebknecht, to Kolarov, to Snowden, Mac Donald, Jowett. It is meant to be not «a tribute to the idolatry of the people», but an evidence of «all those who did not give in», symbols of an anonymous mass of proletarian who gave the war «their bodies... but not their

souls»¹⁴⁴. Therefore, regardless of the prohibition, of the censorship, of a large mobilization of police forces, the celebration went on all over Italy, getting a large resonance. Everywhere private meetings and speeches were held in the party sections, at the Camera del Lavoro, and at the Leagues¹⁴⁵; in the evenings there were parties and meetings all held in a very homely atmosphere, with plays and the singing of anthems; and there was no lack of marches, games, propaganda outings or picnics into the country¹⁴⁶. These celebrations are not «signs» of an impossible lack of concern for the grief that is all over Europe, they are instead an indication of how strongly the workers care about their own festivity.

The May Day issue of *Avanti!*, of the *Avanguardia* and of the *Difesa delle Lavoratrici*, have a wide circulation, as well as the single issues. Leaflets are given out, brochures, post-cards, and first-of-May medals are sold.

Avanti! gets generous and massive subscriptions¹⁴⁷. Finally, the abstention from work was widespread in all sectors even if a few defections were registred here and there¹⁴⁸ and in public services¹⁴⁹.

Upon request of the Executive Board, the «red city governments» play a very important role in the celebration. The socialist city officials close the schools, proclaim a holiday for public workers, give out subsidies to those families who are most in need, organize lucky dips, put up the flag and put out posters¹⁵⁰. People answer censorship with determination and a bit of boldness. In Bologna, for example, when the Chief of Police forbade the posting of party posters, huge, white posters appeared all over the walls of the city with «May Day 1916» printed on the top half, with the signatures of the secretaries of the Camera del Lavoro and «Workers, on May Day stay off work!» written in the middle¹⁵¹.

In Milan, due to the fact that censorship mutilated the poster signed by the Mayor and by the municipal council, by erasing from it a sentence of the International, the administration put a stop to all billposting, in sign of protest. Therefore, after the day was over, *Avanti!* could comment: «What good were the prohibitions and the legal restrictions if there was not in the whole of Italy a single spot where the workers, more or less, did not gather together to celebrate this date? And in those places where the festivity was not allowed to take place, didn't it have, perhaps, a greater resonance... the roaming around of the armed forces and the arrests and the doors shut by the Carabinieri?»¹⁵².

What has this Italian May Day got to say about working-class's internationalist revival, about the Zimmerwald movement, about Lenin's strategy of transforming the fight against the war into a revolutionary civil war, about the loss of unity in the socialist parties in the various countries?

As we have mentioned in the previous pages, a lively debate goes on within international socialism. The Italian Party and the Italian labor movement are tuned in with this debate. Zimmerwald's manifesto, for example, had a very wide circulation in Italy. Published in the *Avanti!* of October 14, thanks to a trick by Serrati, the document was read, discussed, praised in Milan, Turin, Bologna, Monza; it got the enthusiastic approval of many red city governments and of hundreds of sections ¹⁵³.

The presence itself of Oddino Morgari and of Angelica Balabanoff in the International Socialist Commission in Berne is a clear indication of the very important position held by Italian socialism in Zimmerwald's movement. The attention devoted by Serrati's *Avanti!* to the international debate guarantees that, also thanks to Gustavo Sacerdote's dispatches from Zurich, the news reached the members of the party ¹⁵⁴.

Evidence of this attention is an article written in the *Avanti!* of April 23, a few days before Kienthal and while the various ways of celebrating the First of May are under discussion. The article is titled «Looking forward to the future of the International», and is signed «Gallen» ¹⁵⁵.

In it, even if in an interlocutory form, is disputed Lenin's thesis about the formation of two opposite conceptions on socialism (one stated by the official socialist parties of France and Germany, and by the II International, and the other backed up by the internationalist minorities loyal to Zimmerwald) leading to a necessary division. To this thesis is opposed the line ratified at the International congresses in Stuttgart and Balse and the opportunity to postpone until after the war any division, which is considered, at the moment, hasty and dangerous.

Under this light, the downfall of socialist internationalism is explained as a consequence of subjective and psychological reasons, while, at the same time, credit is given to the II International for its functioning as «a last hope for the "Social-Nationals" the day they'll need an excuse to reconcile» ¹⁵⁶.

It is quite evident that the orientation is towards the «recovery»

and the «preservation» of the II International, rather than towards its final disruption. This is an advance news of what would be, within a few days, the Italian delegations's position at Kienthal ¹⁵⁷. But the First of May of 1916 does not enter such debates.

It prefers to find consolation in the revival of internationalism and unity, in the pride for the coherent and important part Italian socialism played in pulling together the differences of opinion in the International, during the first and difficult months of the war ¹⁵⁸. As far as this May Day is concerned, Zimmerwald and Kienthal represent a symbol of the everlasting truth and vitality of socialism, more than the high-peak in the meditations on the mistakes made by the II International or the effort to derive new strategies from the crisis and the internal confrontations ¹⁵⁹.

This First of May, smeared with Italian blood, celebrates, therefore, the victory of socialism over war ¹⁶⁰, the shattering of the bourgeoisie and the final triumph of socialist internationalism ¹⁶¹. If the International was not capable of preventing the war, it will be the war itself that will give the populations of the future a guarantee for peace. «When.... millions of men will return to their homes... shall see this *ideal of international brotherhood* shine in all its splendour. All those who made fun of it and spoke against it will be forced to admit that they were mistaken» ¹⁶². More than just talk about the future of the International and about the revolution, this brotherhood sings, with renewed energy and with a stronger hope, its anthem to peace. It is, therefore, the celebration of the new unity and of the revival of internationalism.

But what does this resurgent internationalism look like? Did the months of August 1914 and of May 1915 change in any way the nature of Italian socialist internationalism? From what we have seen in this May Day we would answer «no». In fact, leaving aside the leading articles, it is sufficient to go through the news of the political speeches, the reports on the demonstrations, or to examine carefully what is inscribed on the subscriptions in favor of *Avanti!*, what the good wishes and the greetings which the second page of the party organ is full of, to find out that the internationalism of which we are having a revival has its deep roots in the past, that it is still a dream for a world of peace and universal brotherhood. May Day, in a way, believes more in the unity of the workers' movement than in its division; it is more filled with symbolic images and facts than with strategic, revolutionary struggles; it identifies itself, at least at this

point, more with Morgari, a messenger of peace that travels through Europe in order to reconcile the differences of opinion in the International ¹⁶³, than with Lenin ¹⁶⁴.

By saying this, we don't mean, of course, to bring the internationalism expressed by this May Day down to the mere level of a general desire for peace, indifferent to the events that in the previous two years had changed the face of Europe and of international socialism. This May Day, in fact, auspicates the «International as a school, able to bring together the revolutionaries from all its classrooms» ¹⁶⁵, and «free from the coercions that held back the reformist International» ¹⁶⁶: from the war would soon come «a third International» ¹⁶⁷ and the struggle for peace may end with the final victory of socialism and of the revolution. But these are hints that are still weak, the first resonances of a discussion that in those very same months was beginning to take place among those that belonged to the most extreme Italian left-wing, from Serrati to Bordiga, to the young socialists of the *Avanguardia* and to the Turin group ¹⁶⁸. As in the past, the internationalism of this May Day does not have only one face. There is room in it for the dream of a peaceful Europe made up of free nations as well as for the hope of a real socialist revolution, undertaken by a working-class that believes more in class than in nations. It is an internationalism that is not yet shaped as an international revolutionary strategy. It exists as a feeling, and an ethical desire ¹⁶⁹. In it we can see and find, at the same time, all the Italian socialism, from the reformists to the *intrasingenti* to the revolutionaries. The First of May of 1916 is «old-style», neither deaf nor indifferent to the «novelties» brought about by the war but loyal to its tradition.

A further evidence of this comes from the celebrations in Milan and Turin. In the capital city of Lombardy, starting from the very first days of April, socialist and anarchist groups started an active propaganda in working class neighbourhoods and especially among women, in order to mobilize the masses against the war. To do that, thousands of leaflets had been printed and given out in front of the Manifattura Tabacco and other factories ¹⁷⁰. In the same days, the *Fascio di azione rivoluzionaria* had published in the *Popolo d'Italia* the announcement of a rally to be held on the First of May in Piazza Duomo ¹⁷¹. With the neutralists and the interventionists trying to mobilize the people, the Milanese socialist section replied by calling a meeting at the *Teatro del Popolo* where Turati would speak ¹⁷².

Turati himself, who was summoned by the Prefect and by Mayor Caldara, when shown a copy of the leaflet spurring women to participate in demonstrations, said that he «was personally against this kind of demonstration»¹⁷³, declared that the section had nothing to do with it and took it upon himself to see that there would be no trouble in the streets. In the Milanese First of May, then, at least during its preparatory stage, there are not only deep clashes between interventionists and neutralists¹⁷⁴ but also internal conflicts within the socialists themselves, between Turati's reformism and Serrati's left-wing views about social conflicts and the way the anti-war fight should be carried on. It is a difference of opinion based on a different evaluation of what part and what function should the party and the working-class movement play in the war. If in Turati's choice to keep May Day within legality and in respect of the tradition of the festivity, we can see the coherence with a strategy that had been drawn up by Italian reformism during the very first months of the war, on the other hand, in the choice of mobilizing the people and taking them into the streets we can see the old desire of the *intransigente* and revolutionary left-wing to express the people's dissatisfaction, more than a definite revolutionary project. However the divided soul of the Milanese May Day will clash with the State which forbids the women's demonstration in Piazza Duomo¹⁷⁵, as well as the demonstration called by the anarchists in Piazzale Loreto¹⁷⁶, and Turati's speech at the Teatro del Popolo¹⁷⁷. Moreover, the censorship whitewashed as we said before, the poster put out by the Committee. This brings about a strong reaction by Turati, who protests in the City Council against «a Prefect and State that... dare to treat Milan...with such an impudence that not even a PS delegate of the "camorra" would dare to use... with a non-conformist town or village in Puglia in the election days»¹⁷⁸.

The First of May in Turin was not so divided. In this city¹⁷⁹, the socialist section, backed up by a strongly anti-war working class, shares the *intransigente*, left-wing position¹⁸⁰. On May Day morning, after the Prefect prohibited the rally and the march, the leaders and a large group of militants met at the «Palazzo del Popolo», in Siccardi Street, which was closed and garrisoned by the police¹⁸¹. Upon Lazzari's arrival, a small group of people gathered, among them was Pietro Rabezana, secretary of the local unit, together with Costantino Lazzari and other local leaders¹⁸² and, since there was the prohibition of the Prefect to meetings and to public demonstrations, they started to stroll up and down discussing what to do. In the meantime, more militants

continued to arrive for the speech. Soon, the existing tension exploded when Rabbezzana was arrested. The police dispersed the demonstrators and arrested a few militants. From many directions came voices that sang «The International». In the end, by small groups, the militants gathered at the «May Day Club», where Lazzari gave a private speech. In the afternoon there was another meeting, again with Lazzari, in the «Borgo San Paolo» neighbourhood, during which the future revolution and the internationalist coherence of Italian socialists were praised. Other small gatherings with food and songs were held in the clubs in the suburbs.

A great abstention from work was registered in the militarized industries. The First of May as celebrated in Turin, then, is *intransigente* and revolutionary and a working class event. It is May Day that identifies with Liebknecht's heroic fight against the war («Liebknecht... belongs to us. His heart beats with our heart, with the heart of all the workers in the world, beyond the frontiers, as we wait for a brighter tomorrow») ¹⁸³, but that, at least at this stage, has not accepted Lenin's revolutionary and defeating strategy. We are still within a strict neutralism and within an *intransigente* position which is strictly Italian and which gathers unionists, anarchists and left-wing socialists, all as one class against the war.

The real «soul» of this Italian First of May, can very well be seen, so it seems to me, in some «images» that stamp the memory of the «solemn date» on our mind. Then the strong giant standing on a factory chimney-pot and throwing down on the sleeping city socialist propaganda leaflets, the word of faith. The same image will be found on the May Day post-card ¹⁸⁴ and also on the first page of the special issue of the *Avanti!* There are the shaking hands, in a fraternal gesture to be found on the May Day medal ¹⁸⁵. There is Scaldarini's illustration in the *Avanti!* of May 3rd showing a beheaded, short bourgeois and a strong and vigorous socialist ¹⁸⁶.

The illustrations for this May Day all show the rebirth of hope, a renewed attempt to tie together once again the broken-up threads, along the lines of a desire to start again and continue, more than to reverse and change.

Before I conclude I'd like to touch upon some elements which seem to me particularly telling, meaningful, and suggestive. I am referring to the column called *Saluti dal fronte* (Greetings from the front line), printed in *Avanti!* and many socialist leaflets, and to the commemoration of the dead. The exchange of greetings between comrade soldiers

on the front line and civilians in the party sections, which the press informs of day after day, becomes more intense as the First May comes closer and closer ¹⁸⁷. The date, which is traditionally an occasion to send greetings to dear ones who are far, to comrades who emigrated, becomes now a ritual occasion to reinforce the ties between the internal front and the first line, in the name of a common rejection of war and of the desire to fight for working-class redemption. In commemoration of those who died on the front line homage is paid to the fallen, solidarity extended to the soldiers and help given to the families.

«We feel that we ought to have respect for those who fight and die and while we cover their graves with red carnations, we wish and hope that the new era will be able to lift humanity up again and set it back on its way to progress» ¹⁸⁸. In the cult of the dead converges a painful humanity that includes both the comrades and the millions of humble and unknown infantrymen all drawn together by a common destiny: victims of a war they did not want, fighting and dying for a cause that is not their own. In the commemoration, those that have died in this war add up to the already enormous number of «humble heroes» who have fought daily in the streets, in the fields, in the factories against social injustice and have been victims of bourgeois reaction. And if the former, unlike the latter, die without believing in the reasons that are at the basis of their sacrifice, this does not mean that sacrifice is to be praised less. If nothing else, that is a further indication of how bitter is the violence and the injustice inflicted upon them. «Our touched greeting goes to those workers that fell in the holy battles for the redemption of the oppressed, to those that have died and to those that have been wounded in all the countries and that were taken away from their worthwhile fight for their work and were sent and will be sent... to shed their blood all over Europe, to their sorrowful families;... and in order to honor the former ones, and to be of comfort to the latter ones, may the brothers that come back find, in addition to the love of their dear ones,... the largest... family of men that work and fight together... and their right place in the future, bloodless battles in favour of the economic and moral redemption. In such a way we wish to celebrate the First of May» ¹⁸⁹. In the name of that sacrifice that was not wanted but that was, however, undertaken just the same and quite often in a heroic way, the militants declare their desire to march again, together with the comrades that will come back, towards socialism.

From «the red glares of the East» to «the dark and sad» May Day after Caporetto

From the Summer of 1916 to the Spring of 1917, while in the countries at war the dead, the destruction reach more and more dreadful levels, there is a radicalization of social tensions, the spreading of an even stronger desire for peace, an increase in struggles and agitations in all Europe. From the strikes of women workers in the rifle factories of Dion in France, between June and July of 1916 ¹⁹⁰, to the thousands of workers who demonstrate in the streets to express their solidarity to Karl Liebknecht, convicted for the May events, in Berlin, in Brunswick, in Bremen, in Stuttgart ¹⁹¹, to the murder in Austria of the Head of Cabinet, Count Stürgkhl, by the hand of Friedrich Adler ¹⁹², the hardship and the opposition to the war take different forms, related to the various national realities and working-class conditions.

Together with the social radicalization we find, at the very same time, a progressive strengthening of the left-wing loyal to Zimmerwald, with, regardless of the censorship, extends its influence over all the European countries from Germany to Russia, France, England, Norway, the Netherlands, Denmark ¹⁹³. This strengthening does not imply internal unity. Therefore, while Lenin and the bolsheviks oppose “national” socialism and “center” socialism, which is pacifist but not revolutionary enough and not in favor of a III International, the spartachists decide, even if with some reservation, to join the German Independent Socialdemocratic Party (USPD), founded in Gotha in April 1917, by the Center-opposition expelled by the SPD ¹⁹⁴.

At the same time, the center minorities still present within the socialist parties increase their efforts in order to obtain an immediate meeting of all the sections of the International.

The number of initiatives by the various groups increase and the opposing views present within each national socialist party cause divisions and the birth of new political factions ¹⁹⁵. The Russian revolution fits in this complicated situation as a clarifying element, which will affect deeply both the course of the war and European history.

The revolutionary explosion of February and March 1917 has a loud echo among the peoples of Europe. 300,000 workers go on strike in Berlin in a protest against the reduction of the daily bread ration. The movement assumes a mass dimension: it involves 319 factories

and spreads to other German cities, from Brunswick to Halle, to Magdeburg, to Leipzig. In Austria, starting in March, there are agitations and frequent strikes ¹⁹⁶ due to the famine and to large cuts in the wages. The eyes look east, to the alliance among people, workers and soldiers that in Russia was able to sweep the power of the Czar away. And it is in this kind of a waiting atmosphere, under a revolutionary influence, that people celebrate the third May Day of war all over Europe. « We shall never have again a First of May that offers us such a life, such an enthusiasm, such spontaneity » ¹⁹⁷. The First of May which Maurice Dommanget speaks of, is the one in Petrograd.

In other Russian cities and towns as well the festivity is celebrated with solemnity. Near the front line, soldiers fraternize with the demonstrators and lead the processions. In the trenches, revolutionary songs are sung, speeches are given, and celebrations are made. « This day... marks the end of a social order and the tumbling down of a world » ¹⁹⁸. What Maurice Paléologue, French ambassador to Russia, wrote in his *Journal* gives the exceptional meaning of this revolutionary May Day ¹⁹⁹.

In Berlin the large display of police forces and the very strict controls do not allow for a big demonstration after the numerous strikes of the previous days. Nevertheless, strikes take place in some factories in Berlin and in Leipzig. In Austria, the Socialist Party calls for the abstention from work. In Vienna, the strike spreads to the munition factories; many speeches deal with the serious food shortage and praise the Russian revolution; in the afternoon people march in procession and the celebrations in the open go on until very late at night. Also in Budapest and other Hungarian cities there are marches and abstentions from work. In France, once again, the most militant stance is taken by the « Fédération des Métaux », and by the Union Defense Committee, which oppose the ambiguity of the CGT and ask their associates to keep off work, praise the Russian revolution and the German strikes, and organize a rally in the large halls of the Trade Union House in Paris. Moreover, the Central Committee of the socialists and the trade-unionists loyal to Zimmerwald takes it upon itself to give out many documents that inform about the Russian revolution and carry the appeal to the workers of all countries of the Committee of the Russian workers and soldiers. Impressive demonstrations also take place in Sweden where more than 100,000 people march in Stockholm and in Switzerland, especially in Zurich, Geneva and Berne ²⁰⁰.

As far as Italy is concerned, in our country as well as in the rest of Europe, the social tension has grown in the previous months. Between the Fall of 1916 and the Summer of 1917, in the industrial triangle but also in Toscana, in Emilia Romagna and in Lazio there is an increase of strikes, agitations, demonstrations in the streets during which the wage claims of factory workers unite with the popular protest against the high cost of living and the lack of commodities, coming especially from women²⁰¹. At the basis of the mobilization, which in Milan or Turin reaches the dimensions of a revolt, there is the weariness of the war, the echo of the February revolution and a desire for peace that is now abandoning a submitted pacifism and looks for its way through the struggle.

While in the country the uneasiness is increasing, a process of a progressive divergence between the reformists and the left wing is taking place in the Party and in the labor movement. Due to the international events and to the national ones (the fall of Salandra, the strong popular mobilization for peace, and the workers' struggles) such process expresses itself in a difference of evaluation of those events and of their effects on the war, and produces new strategies for struggle against war²⁰².

On the national level, reformists are developing an action aiming at the utilization of every space opened by the new government, with the purpose of loosening censorship, defending institutional freedoms, mitigating popular uneasiness. On the international level they develop a strategy that assumes a substantial identity between «Wilsonism» and «Zimmerwaldism» and entrusts to the encounter between internationalist socialism and bourgeois democracy the destiny of peace²⁰³. In the left wing, there is a progressive shift of Serrati towards Leninism, the formation of an Extreme Left, the radicalization of the propaganda against war, aiming to obtain at any cost an immediate peace through popular mobilization²⁰⁴. There is in the left wing a new will of struggle; it shows the preference of the Italian *intransigenti* for the mobilization in the streets as opposed to parliamentary action, it tends anyhow to connect the struggle against the war with the social revolution.

In this climate the Italian May Day gets overstrained and becomes a day of struggle. It keeps its eyes towards the East; the Russian revolution is at the center of its consideration and different analyses and strategies are intertwined around it: «We turn ...our hearts to the great light of liberty and justice which spreads from Russia all over the

world. May Day 1917 records... a first enormous conquest of the proletarian blood on the battle-fields»²⁰⁵.

The «Manifesto» of the *Unione Sindacale Milanese* published on the *Internazionale* celebrates in this way its First of May, exalting Russia. In the February events it reads the first exalting result of the «revolutionary war», the example of a revolution which is «both social and national», the mark of a strategy²⁰⁶ which «integrating the social justice and the justice between nations» can involve the popular masses in the war. It implies an anti-German reading of the February revolution which was common to all the forces of *Interventismo*, and at the same time it demonstrates the renewed vitality of political initiative of the Italian revolutionary interventionism²⁰⁷. Also the documents published on the occasion of the First of May in the *Critica Sociale*, particularly Claudio Treves' article and Turati's answer to the letter of Augusto Osimo, consider the international facts. There we find all the elements of the analysis of the Russian Revolution and of Wilson's theory which had been elaborated by the major reformist leaders.

«A new idealism triumphs with the Russian revolution and the intervention of America in Europe. Romanov abdicates... the Hohenzollern and Habsburg make promises of renovation»²⁰⁸. With these words Treves celebrates the defeat of war as will of power and the triumph of Socialism. But, facing the revolutionary events of these months is it still possible to defend socialist neutralism? How can we deny the revolutionary war of the interventionists? Treves doesn't shun the thorny problem and specifies: «Who dares praise the war? so that the people pass from the worse evil to revolution?»²⁰⁹ It is not the war which has given birth to Wilson's theory and to the Russian revolution, but its failure and the impossibility of a victory. The war «is a capitalistic fact» and therefore «socialism refuses it»²¹⁰.

After the recognition of the great value of neutralism, the First of May of the Italian reformism proposes, mainly through Turati's words, an interpretation of Wilson's theory as a proposition of workers' democracy on the European stage. This democracy wishes to obtain, even by fighting, a fair peace²¹¹. On the other hand, it considers the Russian revolution as a triumph of the democratic and popular forces, which are also pursuing not «a separate peace... but Wilson's peace, which is also Zimmerwald's and ours»²¹². From this substantial identity between Wilson's and Zimmerwald's theories derives the new phase of the conflict and the necessity for the socialist

parties to change their strategy towards the war, which is no more «the other war, but becomes the anti-war»²¹³. May Day of 1917 records, therefore, a new way to read European events by the Italian reformists: which amounts to a reaffirmation of bourgeois democracy in international capitalism, as represented by Wilson, against imperialism and of its possible convergence with international socialism. The reformist plan of a junction between socialism and democratic bourgeoisie is here resumed on a larger scale²¹⁴.

The Russian revolution returns to the foreground when we examine the official documents of the Party in the May Day issue of *Avanti!* and the poster of the Confederazione Generale del Lavoro.

The revolution is seen as a great popular event, the victorious battle of oppressed masses for their emancipation. The revolutionary process is emphasized and the wish is expressed that it may be not «in favour of pseudo-democratic currents,²¹⁵ but towards the definitive victory of the proletarian class and of peace».

Within the general acknowledgement and the cautiousness due to incomplete information²¹⁶, two different interpretations emerge of «the class character of the revolutionary process and the forces at stake». The *Avanti!*, for example, publishes two articles on the subject. One is signed by Alessandro Schiavi²¹⁷, who indicates Giorgio Plekhanov as a follower of the *red spring*, proposing thus a «reformist» reading of the February events. The other article, written by Junior²¹⁸, reproduces «The declaration of the soldier's rights», of the Executive Committee of the officers of Petrograd and the Committee of the delegates of workers and soldiers, a sign of the great attention given to the revolutionary and «maximalist» drives present in the revolutionary process²¹⁹. Such a divergence of interpretation and analysis does not only regard the revolution, but also other aspects of May Day. With regard to the period after the war, for example, *Avanti!* fluctuates between the «vigilant» preparation, as Turati says²²⁰, and the preventive warning against collaboration with the bourgeoisie²²¹. With regard to socialist internationalism and the failure of the II International, the old humanitarian and pacifist tradition of Italian socialism²²² supports the revolutionary internationalism of Jacques Mesnil²²³.

This doubleness must be read in the context of the existing factions in the party. It confirms on one hand the shifting to the left of the newspaper; on the other, it points out the still strong influence of reformism²²⁴ and the effort of the leadership and Serrati to dilute

the contrasts. More univocal is the voice of *Avanguardia* and *Grido del Popolo*. The workers' movement «in Russia is clearly displaying its classist and internationalist aspect»²²⁵. The paper of the Federazione Giovanile Socialista confirms the class characters of the February events, associates them to the struggles in Germany, Austria, Hungary, and Bulgaria, and grasps the revolutionary involvements of the new international reality. The Turin revolutionary paper echoes the analysis of *Avanguardia*: «The Russian revolution passes... spreading its far-reaching subversive echo. To-morrow we will march with it... led by its martyrs»²²⁶. For the young socialists and the intransigent left wing, the Russian revolution is therefore the first event of a greater revolution which soon will spread through all Europe²²⁷. All look to Lenin, «the most socialist and revolutionary... among the Russian leaders»²²⁸. That is evidently the most advanced reading of the revolutionary process worked out by Italian socialism during these months²²⁹.

The May Day celebration is also lit up by «the red glares of the East»²³⁰. In spite of the harshness of censorship, still harder than in the preceding years²³¹ it is celebrated in all Italy with great participation, in the usual ways: private and public speeches, circulation of the press, pamphlets on May Day and on the Russian revolution, money collections and subscriptions pro-*Avanti!*, outings to the country with women and children²³², massive abstention from work. Everywhere the meetings echo the Russian revolution and end with the hymns, the wishes of the Italian working classes to the fighting «comrades». The Russian revolution is always praised, be it Maria Giudice speaking, or Barberis in Turin, Bordiga in Naples, Caroti, Serrati, Guido Mondolfo, Modigliani, Treves²³³. Whatever the «reading» of the revolutionary event may be, the Italian working class celebrates the struggle of a people for its rights, the popular desire for peace, the hate for war, and expresses its own pacifism and solidarity for the oppressed.

«The socialists of the villages of the Ancona province salute with enthusiasm the Russian revolution, wishing freedom for all the oppressed and send their reverend greetings to all the proletarian martyrs of the present war».

This is the motion approved among applause at the closing of the Socialist Congress at Chiaravalle on May Day and published in the *Avanti!*²³⁴. In most of Italy, May Day expresses its enormous desire for peace in the hymn to Russia but in many cities people also

demonstrate in the streets. This is the case in Milan. In the capital of Lombardy the day has two faces, the reformist and the revolutionary. The first wants to assert legally and pacifically the popular desire for peace; the second wants a day of struggle ²³⁵.

So, while the City Council following its own tradition, gives schools a holiday, takes initiative of charity ²³⁶ and the Camera del Lavoro mobilizes the leagues, declares abstention from work and organizes the speech of Turati at the «Teatro del Popolo» ²³⁷, the socialist section and federation begin an intensive propaganda in the suburban clubs and in the neighborhoods ²³⁸, distributing thousands of leaflets. The goal is to draw the forces from the *hinterland* to Milan for a mass mobilization ²³⁹.

The day is charged with tension. The first skirmishes happen in the afternoon, at the «Casa del Popolo». At the beginning, although Serrati presents Turati as «our great leader» and the assembly greets him with enthusiastic applause, while the speaker touches upon the meaning of May Day and the serious problems of the after-war period, the audience becomes restless. From the background come shouts and requests for an outside demonstration. Although Serrati intervenes, quitting the chairmanship and the theatre itself with the shouting militants, order is not re-established. Turati expresses himself with decision against any march of protest, because «that would be represented abroad as a revolution» ²⁴⁰ but the assembly contests him fiercely. The chairman is forced to breakup the meeting ²⁴¹. The popular mobilization, the arrival of women from the country provokes fightings and demonstrations in the streets, which expand in the following day to the neighboring towns of Novate, Gallarate, Abbiategrasso, Monza, Rho, Desio, Sesto San Giovanni, Parabiago, Nerviano, Seregno, Curate ²⁴². Other demonstrations take place around Parma, in Salsomaggiore; San Pellegrino; around Ravenna; in Piedmont, in Valenza, Tortona, Pontecurone, Predosa ²⁴³; in Conselice, Massa Lombardia, Lugo; in Tuscany, at San Casciano ²⁴⁴. Everywhere women participate in the demonstrations. It is a «hot» day also in Turin, where the *intransigenti* organize a mass demonstration to stop the war at once. The protest does not end up in fights, it is channeled instead into many, very crowded meetings in the suburban clubs. Skirmishes break out in front of the Camera del Lavoro, where many are arrested ²⁴⁵.

It is then a day of fights and tension in many Italian cities. It does not produce a mobilization of the whole nation as the young socialists

and the left wing had hoped ²⁴⁶, neither does it shift the power relations among the factions, and yet it confronts the party with a real and consistent mass mobilization, and raises the problem of its direction and of the connection between war and social revolution.

One year later, on May Day 1918, European and Italian reality has changed again. In Russia the revolution has brought Lenin and the Bolsheviks to power. On November 5th the new government signs an armistice with Germany. In March it accepts the hard conditions of peace and signs the treaty of Brest-Litovsk, which deprives the young State of many portions of its territory, of one third of its population, and of one half of its industrial plants. An exhausted revolutionary Russia quits the scene, soon followed by Rumania.

In the same months the revolutionary wind which had blown all along 1917 dies out in other European states. In France, «l'année trouble», characterized by mutinies in the army and by a deep moral crisis ²⁴⁷, ends with Georges Clemenceau at the head of the government, the substitution of General Nivelle, responsible for the latest military failures, and the beginning of a definite repression against any form of defeatism. The situation in Germany is more difficult. After the agitations of April in Berlin, insurrections among the navy sailors at anchorage on the Baltic sea took place in June and July. Soon afterwards, in a climate of high social tension, the October revolution and the armistice give way to a great mass mobilization asking for an immediate peace with Russia and the end of the war on all fronts. In January 28,400,000 workers go on strike in the capital. The agitation is also stimulated by the news of manifestations and strikes in Austria-Hungary, and rapidly extends to the big factories in the province and mobilizes one million workers. But the revolutionary attempt is short-lived. On February 1, the military authorities, taking advantage of the hesitations of the leadership of the movement, regain control of the situation.

They declare a state of siege in Berlin, take over the management of seven big factories of the city, prohibit and dissolve violently all the meetings, arrest the rioters, set up special military courts and send to the front hundreds of workers ²⁴⁸. In the first days of February public order is reestablished.

The revolution is blocked and the hopes of peace cut off. The German army, encouraged by the successes on the oriental front, takes again the initiative on the western front, hoping to break the Allies' resistance before the arrival of the American troops. Lenin's rising

to power and the Russian peace have therefore, as immediate counterpart, a violent renewal of war our country is the first to pay for it. On October 24th, the Austrian-German troops break through the Italian lines at Caporetto and penetrate deeply into our territory.

The defeat and the invasion of the national ground happen at the end of a summer filled with popular agitations in the country and in many cities, after the facts of Milan²⁴⁹.

The climax of the struggle is reached in August by the revolt in Turin, which begins on the 22nd. Primed by the lack of bread, it soon assumes the character of an outright popular insurrection²⁵⁰.

The insurrection is not «exceptional in the history written by the Turinese workers' movement, marked as it is by an explosive... tradition of violent struggles»²⁵¹. Its failure is the most organic example of the attempt to impose peace through mass mobilization, but it also stresses the internal division in the Party. The reformists read in that experience further evidence of the danger and futility of these battles in the streets; the *intransigenti*, who had given voice and at the same time had fanned popular exasperation, see in it an evidence of the revolutionary capacity of the masses and the necessity of a more efficient leadership²⁵². Therefore, while the reformists open towards a «better government», the *intransigenti*, who in August had organized an intransigent-revolutionary faction in Florence, prepare themselves for the national congress of the Party in November, being resolute to reduce the autonomy of the parliamentary group and impose a greater internal discipline. Their aim is to reinforce their leadership, to take upon themselves the popular mobilization, to carry on, without hesitation, the revolutionary struggle against the war²⁵³. It is at this point that the defeat of Caporetto takes place. It faces Italian Socialists with the invasion of the country and the threat of a foreign occupation. The answer of the party and of the labor movement are well known: there are the statements of Rigola on the bulletin of the Confederazione Generale del Lavoro (when the enemy treads upon our ground, we have a unique duty... resist); those of Turati and Treves in the *Critica sociale* in the article «Proletariato e Resistenza»; the notice to the people by the Mayors of Milan and of Busto Arsizio; the letter from Caldara to the «Lega dei Comuni Socialisti»; the invitation of the League of the socialist administrators in the occupied territories to take care of the people in difficulty; the solidarity of workers to the national defense²⁵⁴. On the other side there is a stiffening of the left wing; the denunciation of the declarations of Rigola,

Turati, Treves by the Executive and *Avanti!*; the controversy and the accusations against the Parliamentary Group; the condemnation of indiscipline and of personal initiatives; the reaffirmation of an uncompromising opposition to war which is supported by the people's desire for peace²⁵⁵, even though the enemy is at the gates of Italy²⁵⁶. Thus, Caporetto introduces additional and more serious lacerations into Italian socialism. To the different anti-war strategies emerged during 1917, we must add, after Caporetto's defeat, different opinions about national defense and the relation between internationalism and nation.

The period between November 1917 and Spring 1918 is one of the most complex in the history of our country and of socialism.

These are the months of the army's resistance on the Piave, of the great campaign to mobilize public opinion for victory; of the more far-sighted politics of Orlando and the high military Command; of the exaltation of soldier's sacrifice; of the promise of after-war land distribution and great social changes, of the rigorous new start of democratic and revolutionary interventionism, of the improvement of morale in the country and on the front line²⁵⁷. These are also the months when reformists try hard to qualify their patriotism as socialism, while pushing to obtain peace immediately, and the *intransigenti* confirm class opposition against war and try to isolate the rebels in the party. At the same time, against the movement begins a hard repression: Lazzari, Bombacci, and later Serrati are arrested and tried; the press is subjected to heavy censorship; the circulation of *Avanti!* is restricted²⁵⁸.

The celebration of the last May Day of war takes place, then amongst serious difficulties for socialism and revolution. As was already noted, it is a common situation to all European countries. In France, for example, May Day comes soon after the bombing of Paris and the German attack against the English lines in the Flandres.

When the union defence committee meets, in mid-April, to plan the celebrations, it avoids calling for a general strike, following the indications of the minority congress of St. Etienne in March²⁵⁹.

Bourderon, followed by Merrheim, says that the movement cannot take upon itself the responsibility for the defeat. Thus, the committee merely appeals for a participation of the masses in the meetings organized by the trade unions. However, not all the organizations follow this advice of caution²⁶⁰. For example, the metal workers union of Bourges declares a strike, and 15,000 workers take part in

it. In France, May Day reflects the increasing difficulties and disagreements within the minorities favourable to Zimmerwald in front of the dangers threatening the country. While the extreme factions demonstrate openly, the majority remains in a position of waiting cautiousness ²⁶¹.

In Russia, the day does not have the enthusiasm of the year before. The revolution, attacked on many fronts, is in difficulty, the young state is in a very serious situation. May Day is therefore celebrated in a rather subdued way, Lenin speaks in the Red Square and observes a military parade; demonstrations and rallies are organized in some places, but the large popular participation of the year before is not there ²⁶². In Germany, the Spartachists' hope in new revolutionary strikes in the second half of March had vanished because of the indifference of the masses, crushed by repression, by the success of Brest-Litovsk and by the new spur in the hostilities. May Day doesn't record any great mass demonstration ²⁶³. As for our country, this «sad and dark» May Day ²⁶⁴, is marked by the great hopes of revolutionary interventionists and by the difficulties and the dismay of socialists «Workers! Greet May without stopping your machines... Give your strength today so that the builders of your future... and the soldiers who... are fighting will not be lacking in anything.

Give red carnations to the martyrs of freedom» ²⁶⁵.

Revolutionary interventionism looks at the Piave River and the Caporetto area: in the mobilisation of the country and the reaction of the army, it sees an indication of a possible alliance between workers and soldiers, the proletariat and its country, and the reappropriation of national pride by the no longer subordinate popular masses on which tomorrow's revolution is to be based. «The reconciliation of the proletariat with the country... will not assume the form of acceptance of the existing regime but that of hostility and opposition to the existing ruling class» ²⁶⁶. It will imply «the substitution of a class... which did not know how to conduct the war... with the vital forces of labor which, reconciled with their homeland, will... become the new guide in the organisation of society and state» ²⁶⁷.

In the enthusiasm fed by a dream which unexpectedly seems to come true, the interventionists celebrate the death of the old socialist May Day, and the birth of a new revolutionary May Day ²⁶⁸.

The reformists' May Day was quite different. «The war with neither winners nor losers which we hoped for is heading towards victory. The helpless, betrayed and unwillingly betraying Russian Revolu-

tion has prepared the way. The governments... did not understand that the hour of equilibrium had come...²⁶⁹. The failure at Stockolm, the silence of the Entente States to the peace proposals of the Russian government, and the Brest-Litovsk Treaty²⁷⁰ make this May Day bitter. Once again the question recurs of «whether an international proletariat exists,... whether or not proletarian solidarity will break down at the national borders»²⁷¹. Once again it is the conventions between internationalism, «national question» and working class, revolution and homeland that are being questioned. And once again an answer is found in the detailed analysis of the nature and of the dimensions of the transformations enforced by war on the belligerent states: the emergence of new plutocracies in international capitalism; the greater political maturity of the masses; the sharpened class conflict; the spreading «of the same expectations» throughout all countries. Thus, Treves reaffirms that «the social question and its resolution will either be international, or it won't be at all». By the same token, international peace will only be «a corollary of the strength of international proletariat». Only international socialism, uniting liberty with solidarity, will be able to ensure that national questions be resolved not «through victories... of the sword... but through the cohabitation of the races, guaranteed as necessary through vast confederations of states». The necessary revisions with which Italian reformism has to come to terms are thus «historical and not ideological»²⁷². Italian reformism can confidently reaffirm its internationalism as being «supernational... not anti-national»²⁷³; the excellence of class struggle which cannot be the *egoistical* substitution of bourgeois hegemony with proletarian domination, but the self-emancipation of the proletariat in the light of the «liberation of the entire social structure», the absolute faith in socialism as «humanism completely realized»²⁷⁴. The May Day of Italian reformism clarifies to the movement itself its own choices, the new way matured through the impact of war, the attempt to reconcile socialism and democracy in a changed reality, internationalism and nation, class struggle and social solidarity.

What of the left-wing's May Day? From the Executive Board's address to *The Proletarians of Italy* to the special issues of *Avanti!*, to the celebration itself, this revolutionary May Day registers the will to isolate reformist patriotism, a tenacious confirmation of neutrality and internationalism. «...This year's May Day issue must be written by comrades from our faction... Its time that we acted on our

own account»²⁷⁵. The quotation comes from a letter by Serrati to Egidio Gennari concerning the preparation of the special issue of *Avanti!*. Actually, the May Day issue of the party organ does not include any article by Turati or Treves.

Instead, there are columns written by Egidio Gennari, Antonio Gramsci, Mario Trozzi and Abigaille Zanetta.

The speech at the Casa del Popolo in Milan, traditionally entrusted to the reformist leader, is given by Repossi²⁷⁶, while in Turin, Milan, Florence and Rome, the celebration states its classist nature and stresses the unity between the «subversive» forces.

But what are the dominant themes of this revolutionary May Day?

What physiognomy has the celebrations? What does this May Day have to say about the Russian Revolution, the Italian reality after Caporetto, or its own revolutionary strategy?

The May Day pamphlet²⁷⁷, *Avanti!*, *Avanguardia!* and the rest of the revolutionary press, show an oscillation between the reflection on the eternal meaning of the celebration²⁷⁸, the celebration of the past²⁷⁹, the re-affirmation of faith in the principles and the attestations of esteem to Amilcare Cipriani, who had just died²⁸⁰; declarations of faith in Marxism on the occasion of the centenary of the birth of Marx²⁸¹; the stoic acceptance of the present, the projection into the future of revolutionary hopes. But at the heart of this May Day is the relationship with the Russian October. «it is with a deep sense of grief... that we observe the terrible fratricide which is being committed in the fields of revolutionary Russia by the German proletarians»²⁸². The fratricidal violence of the German soldiers is the product of the political «degeneration» or the masses achieved by the «false shepherds of social-patriotism, who made the concept of class and the patriotic feelings overlap in the minds of proletarians instead of showing that they are antithetical»²⁸³. Mario Trozzi, in *Avanti!* identifies the real causes for the interruption in the spreading of the revolution in the mistakes of the Second International, in the subordination of class to country, and in the reforms enforced upon the revolution. But Trozzi's reading of the period is by no means the only one. In the Executive's address to *The Proletarians of Italy*, for example, Lenin's separate peace is presented as a necessary consequence of the mistakes of the Entente, almost an endured necessity rather than a revolutionary decision: the subordination, according to Bordiga²⁸⁴, of national interests to those of the endangered revolution, of country to class. With regard to the nature and the difficulties

of the October Revolution, *Avanguardia* proposes a reading of the events in Russia with an eye on the experiences and fortunes of Italian socialism.

It stresses the class character of the revolution, but also points out its limitations: the absence of a strong organization, which is the «fruit of a long toil over several years»²⁸⁵, and the failure to establish a single front of revolutionary forces against the bourgeoisie.

While expressing its solidarity with Lenin, the left then shows itself to be unable to evaluate the theoretical moment and the deeply revolutionary implications of Leninism. A further confirmation that such is the case, comes from May Day's revolutionary message.

Avanti!, through the pen of Egidio Gennari, delineated the revolutionary strategy for the Left: «A steadfast soul must be forged... knot-like muscles must be built up... the important, rather than the inconsequential problems must be confronted»²⁸⁶. «After the most bitter struggles of yesterday, the very sad fortunes of today, can we still hold hope for tomorrow? The future belongs to those who have faith»²⁸⁷. May Day of 1918 centers around a proclamation of faith, the projection of the revolution into the future. To the present it asks for «readiness». Once again there is recourse to intransigence.

Turning now to May Day itself, solemn interventionist celebrations took place²⁸⁸. The authorisation to stay home from work is granted by the Ministry of Arms and Munitions to workers in auxiliary factories²⁸⁹.

Celebrations for factory workers are organized, in the name of social peace, by single entrepreneurs or by associations of industrialists²⁹⁰. Once again the strategy of the «carrot and the stick» is used by the authorities, who are indulgent towards private meetings, the press and posters extolling the «eternal» meaning of May Day, but implacable against any public rally or reference to the Russian Revolution, to peace, to anti-war demonstrations²⁹¹. On the other front, May Day for the workers' movement carries with it indications of the worries of parts of Italian Socialism for the tribulations of the country²⁸², of the difficulties of the party arising out of the accusations of defeatism and the attacks against its leaders.

It is an «austere» and essentially quiet May Day. It is a response to the interventionist pressures not to interrupt work by, in fact, observing the strike as sign of the workers' autonomy and «of the invincible will to disarm as quickly as possible»²⁹³, but it avoids marches and demonstrations, adopts private meetings, expresses its potential

for struggle through subscriptions to *Avanti!*, in the commemoration of martyrs of past struggles rather than through mass mobilisation²⁹⁴. «The authorities... have demonstrated a degree of tolerance... all meetings... took place in perfect calm». *Avanti!* described in these terms the events of the Florentine May Day²⁹⁵. Turin echoes such behavior. «May Day was celebrated with unusual quiet. The voluntary and unsatisfying renunciation to any political demonstration, previously decided upon by the workers' organisations, took from May Day its particular character»²⁹⁶. Thus, despite the concern for public order kept alive by popular discontent in some provinces and the fear of a repetition of the clashes of 1917²⁹⁷, no agitation or clashes were registered on the day²⁹⁸. It lost the strength of May Day of 1917 and transformed itself from a moment of struggle into one of «expectation» of a better future, be it the end of the threat at the borders or the wait for an imminent revolutionary event.

In 1918 there is then a falling back from the level of action to that of a proclamation of faith. Socialist internationalism and opposition to the war step back from revolutionary tension to idealist hope.

What conclusions are we allowed draw from our research on May Day in the years of the Great War? What conclusions can be derived on internationalism and on the internationalism — national question nexus within Italian socialism?

Throughout the course of the war, the celebration of May Day represents a ritual occasion in our country for attesting the vitality and eternal validity of socialism as an alternative model of social organization for humanity.

This happens in a phase in our history in which the forces of militarism and of capitalist imperialism, favored by the weakness of and the internal contradictions within the international workers' movement, attack socialism and deny its tenets. The wartime May Days are thus a solemn reassertion and tenacious defence of the principles of socialism. Each particular aspect of the celebrations is loaded with idealistic tension, with faith. A faith which expresses itself in the religion of memories, in austere thoughtfulness and in the tenacious hanging on to the workers' «festa». But alongside such faith the bloody May Days carry with them signs of the search for answers to the questions raised in Italian socialism by the collapse of old certainties, by the breaking of international unity within the workers' movement, by the national choices made by brother socialist parties.

By analysing the official documents and the political syntheses writ-

ten for the various May Days, it is possible to trace within Italian syndicalism the passage from the class vs. nation, contraposition of May 1914, to the internationalism amongst countries, that was born of the revolutionary war and founded on the recognition and the acceptance of national values. From 1917 onwards, prevails the delineation of a revolutionary strategy based on the reconciliation of the popular classes, matured in the war, with the country, and, upon such bases, the claim such classes play a leading role in the national society.

Italian reformism, as has been followed through the principal May Day editorials and articles, developed along consequential, even if tormented paths. Starting with an internationalism which does not deny the elementary sentiments of attachment and of love of country born in the Risorgimento, through the analysis of the imperialist evolution of international capitalism, Italian reformism denounces the errors and blunders of interventionist socialism and the instrumental... exploitation of patriotism. In internationalism it sees the way towards a superior form of civilization as well as the strength and force of socialism. These reflections sought to resolve the country-class confrontation through the inclusion of ever broadening popular classes in the life of the country; a national integration not in the direction of a subordinate nationalisation, but characterised by a transformation of the state in the socialist sense by autonomous and protagonist masses. Upon these premises, reformism rejects the sabotage of the war effort, it does not change its strategy of social transformation in 1917, and, when faced with the invasion of the national territory, while not abandoning pacifism and internationalism, it affirms the need for resistance. In this period, Italian reformism thus does not follow the path of country-class reconciliation, but develops a concept of country as a place within which the popular masses will be able to achieve their own emancipation and as a starting point for that internationalist action in which the workers' movement celebrates its greatness. In contact with the terrible war experience and the international events of 1917 and 1918, internationalist reformism assumes living form. From a proclamation of faith, it transforms itself into an active strategy aimed at uniting an advanced bourgeoisie and the proletariat around the project of supra-national organs which would ensure the peaceful coexistence of the nations upon the basis of democracy and liberty. It is an internationalism which expresses the partial national integration which has already taken place, its

detachment from nationalist furores, its faith that the nations will live together in a more just and democratic way.

The internationalism of the left-wing is, on the other hand, the voice of the most advanced revolutionary elite of the Italian workers' movement and of the weakest popular masses.

It is to pass from the proclamation of faith, from *intransigente* neutralism, from the ideal recognition of the priority of class over nation, to attempt to marry anti-war and social struggle with the pursuit of peace and revolutionary internationalism. The Left, however, ignores the class-country, internationalism-national defence question. In fact, if the most advanced movements within the Left delineate a solution to the question raised by the October Revolution along the lines of subordination of country to class, of revolutionary to national interests, for the greater part, both with the top leaders and with the rank-and-file, these problems remain unsolved. Revolution thus slows at Caporetto and stops on the Piave. It reverts back to a hope: internationalism becomes an ideal once again.

The debates and the political reflection which the wartime May Days stimulated within Italian socialism, thus evidence the passage towards different strategies for internationalism and revolution. The war, dramatically posing the problem of national defence, demands decisions from the Italian Socialist movement. While thousands of men are at the front and part of the national territory is under enemy fire, the country issue can no longer be eluded: either it is to be recognised and embodied into the socialist revolution or it is to be subordinated to it. Italian Socialism, beginning in the war years, gives varying answers to this dilemma. On these themes definitive splits are to develop in the immediate post-war period.

A final reflection on the metamorphoses introduced by war in certain typical collective behaviour patterns²⁹⁹ related to May Day. I refer to the exchange of greetings and best wishes on the occasion of the celebration of May Day, which becomes an expression of solidarity to the comrades at the front and to all soldiers³⁰⁰; to the social evenings in the party sections, which become farewell rites for those leaving for the war theatre and receptions of returning veterans; to the commemoration of the victims of the fallen and of all the martyrs of the «appalling bloodbath»³⁰¹. What idea of war, what idea of country do such moves represent in the collective mentality of socialist militants who also celebrate May Day adopting these customs? Does solidarity and commemoration evidence some form of resign-

ed acceptance of the war, of an initial, painful appropriation of country? In the light of my investigation, I do not believe that any modification of the idea of war as anti-proletarian, bourgeois violence or any growth of patriotism can be seriously argued. However, it seems to me that the development, amongst militant socialists as well, of the sense of belonging to a broader community, united by a common tragic experience can be read. It is the community of those who participate in or suffer under the conflict, of those who construct their expectations and hopes on the strength of that sacrifice, not chosen but borne nevertheless, and often with courage and dignity. In such a way the war is lived as a common experience and it becomes the connecting element amongst militants, popular classes, and social groupings until then extraneous to socialism. The workers' and socialist movement thus becomes part, precisely because of the war, of a greater dimension, of an extended collectivity, of a more general evolution of Italian society. Permitting such a unity to be progressively shattered, partly because of an erroneous evaluation of the processes involved, and allowing the war to reassume its confrontationist image rather than become an element of possible social unification, represents a serious and tragic error of Italian Socialism during the fiery post-war years.

Translated by Marina Enriquez and Livia Zannini

1 Enzo Ferrari, *Primo Maggio!, Avanti!*, 1 maggio 1914.

2 «La grandiosa manifestazione proletaria del Primo Maggio», *Avanti!*, 3 maggio 1914.

3 For bibliographical references see F. Pedone, *Novant'anni di pensiero e azione socialista. Attraverso i congressi del Psi 1892-1914*, Venezia, 1983, pp. 428-455; R. De Felice, *Mussolini il rivoluzionario 1918-1920*, Torino, 1965, pp. 177-197; M. Degl'Innocenti, *La crisi del riformismo e gli intransigenti (1911-1915)*; G. Sabbatucci ed., *Storia del socialismo italiano*, Roma, 1980, pp. 428-435; L. Cortesi, *Il socialismo italiano tra riforme e rivoluzione, 1892-1921*, Bari, 1969, pp. 549-610; R. De Felice, *Op. cit.*, p. 189; F. Pedone, *Op. cit.*, p. 431; M. Degl'Innocenti, *Op. cit.*, p. 428.

4 «Elenco delle sezioni socialiste regolarmente iscritte al Partito e relativo numero dei soci al 31 maggio 1914, divise per Provincia», *Avanti!*, 12 aprile 1914.

5 R. De Felice, *Op. cit.*, pp. 112-220; M. Degl'Innocenti, *Op. cit.*, pp. 428-432; G. Galli, *Storia del socialismo italiano*, Roma, Bari, 1983, pp. 65-80.

6 G. Salvemini in his May Day 1914 article in *Unità* spoke of «socialist rebirth», *L'Unità*, 1 maggio 1914. See also R. De Felice, *Op. cit.*, p. 192.

- 7 B. Mussolini, *Il Congresso d'Ancona, Avanti!*, 1 maggio 1914; G. Zibordi, *Attorno al Congresso-Tipi ed episodi*; G. Galli, *Op. cit.*, pp. 69-70.
- 8 M. Degl'Innocenti, *Op. cit.*, p. 440.
- 9 E. Vandervelde, «La pace armata», *Avanti!*, 1 maggio 1914.
- 10 G. Mosse, *La nazionalizzazione delle masse*, Bologna, 1975.
- 11 A. Panaccione, *Le gigantesche scarpe da bambino del proletariato*, A. Panaccione ed., *Sappi che oggi è la tua festa...*, pp. 73-124.
- M. Antonioli, *La data d'oro del socialismo. Aspetti del Primo Maggio in Italia tra otto e novecento*, *ibid.*, pp. 17-50.
- 12 A. Riosa, *Introduzione, Ibid.*, p. 12.
- 13 G. Ginex, *Per un archivio iconografico del Primo Maggio, Ibid.*, pp. 127-134.
- 14 For special issues on May Day see *Primo Maggio 1890-1924. Numeri unici*. Catalogue edited by F. Dolci and R. Maini, Florence, 1979. S. Ortaggi, «Il primo maggio nei numeri unici della Biblioteca Nazionale di Firenze», *Rivista di Storia Contemporanea*, n. 4, 1979, pp. 595-604.
- 15 «La Grandiosa manifestazione proletaria del Primo Maggio. Grosseto, Volterra, Reggio Emilia, Popoli, Bisceglie», *Avanti!*, 3 maggio 1914; «Ancora la manifestazione del 1° Maggio, Chivasso, Poleselle, Vicenza», *Avanti!*, 4 maggio 1914.
- 16 «Altri comizi di Primo Maggio, Messina, Portocivitanova, Massa», *Avanti!*, 5 maggio 1914; «La grandiosa manifestazione del Primo Maggio. Genova, Roma», *Avanti!*, 3 maggio 1914, *op. cit.*...; «Le Manifestazioni del Primo Maggio. Canosa, Gioia del Colle, Monopoli», *La Regione. Organo della Federazione socialista pugliese*, 9 maggio 1914. The choice of intransigence and the rejection of blocks raised unconditional support in the Southern socialist movement, especially in Puglia, where the entire movement was deeply opposed to Giolitti; see F. Giagnotti, *Il dibattito politico del movimento socialista di Terra di Bari dal Congresso di Reggio Emilia alla prima Guerra mondiale*, (1912-1914), «*Quaderni-Università degli Studi — Istituto di Scienza Storico — Politiche*», Bari, 1983-84, n. 3, pp. 223-262.
- 17 For the attitude of *Avanti!* in this period, see R. De Felice, *Op. cit.*, pp. 136-176.
- 18 «La grandiosa manifestazione..., Cinisello», *Avanti!*, 3 maggio 1914, *cit.*.
- 19 «Salve maggio augurale», *L'Avanguardia, Giornale della gioventù socialista italiana*, 1 maggio 1914; «Il carattere storico del 1° Maggio», *Il Grido del Popolo, Organo dei socialisti di Torino*, 1° Maggio 1914; «La grandiosa manifestazione..., Granduno», *Avanti!*, 3 maggio 1914, *cit.*; R. Rossi, *Dopo un quarto di secolo, L'Internazionale*, edizione per la provincia di Roma, 1st May 1914.
- 20 M. Reberieux, 1° maggio *Il marxismo nell'età della Seconda Internazionale. Il dibattito sulla guerra*, Torino, 1979, pp. 908.
- 21 This relates to Kautsky's definition of May Day, used by Reberieux, *Op. cit.*, p. 909.
- 22 «E la pace in terra agli uomini di buona volontà...», *Bandiera Rossa*, special issue by the workers of Turro Milanese, May Day 1914.
- 23 *Protokoll des Internationalen Arbeiter — Congresses zu Paris. Abgehalten vom 15 bis 20. Juli 1889. Nürnberg, 1890*. The quotation has been taken from A. Panaccione, *Op. cit.*, p. 81.
- 24 A. Panaccione, *ibid.*
- 25 M. Reberieux, *Op. cit.*, pp. 907-935 — L. Strik—Lievers, *L'antimilitarismo socialista e la questione della rivoluzione borghese nel primo decennio di vita del Psi*, various authors, *Prampolini e il socialismo riformista*, Roma, 1981.

26 With regard to the 1911-1912 period it is sufficient to recall the Franco-German tensions arising out of the Moroccan Crisis, the Lybian war and the Second Balkan Crisis of 1912.

27 An enormous amount of printed material is available. In the preparation of this work, *L'Avanti!*, *La Confederazione del lavoro*, *L'Avanguardia!*, *Critica Sociale*, *L'Internazionale*, the organs of some provincial Federations and all special issues of Leagues and of Camere del lavoro found in the national libraries in Florence and the Milan libraries have been used.

28 «La grande manifestazione di Primo Maggio — Noci», *La Regione*, 9 maggio 1914, cit..

29 The Management Committee of the Italian Socialist Party, «Primo maggio 1914», *Avanti!*, 1 maggio 1914.

30 The Executive Committee of the USI, «Primo Maggio di lotte e di speranza», *L'internazionale*, 1 maggio 1914; *Ibid*, 11, 18, 25 aprile 1914; *L'Avanguardia*, 26 aprile 1914; 3, 10 maggio 1914; *Avanti!*, 3, 4, 5 maggio 1914. «I fatti del 1° maggio, Minervino. Provocazioni poliziesche. Arresti in massa». *L'Internazionale*, 16 maggio 1914. *La Regione*, 9 maggio 1914. *La Fiumana*, 17 maggio 1914. «Macchie e macchiette. Primo Maggio pirotecnico», *L'Internazionale*, edizione per Milano, 25 aprile 1914.

31 On the occasion of May Day an intense campaign for the purchase of new printing presses of the production of *Avanti!* was launched. A pro-*Avanti!* committee was formed, lotteries were organised, collections made and a pro-*Avanti!* badge sold. News pages during the period gave frequent updates of the funds collected.

32 *Avanti!*, 1 maggio 1914.

33 G. Oliva, *Esercito, paese e movimento operaio*, Milano, 1986, pp. 96-252; P. Dogliani, *La scuola delle reclute. L'Internazionale giovanile socialista dalla fine dell'ottocento alla prima guerra mondiale*, Torino, 1983, pp. 46-116.

34 «Verso il Congresso di Ancona, Il problema degli armamenti e il congresso di Vienna», *Avanti!*, 1 aprile 1914; «Guerra al regno della guerra», *Il Riscatto*, cit.; A. Casali, *Socialismo e internazionalismo nella storia d'Italia*, Claudio Treves 1869-1933, Napoli, 1985, p. 75.

35 C. Treves, «Contro la guerra», *Il Primo Maggio del Secolo Nuovo*, 1 maggio 1914.

36 M. Rebérioux, *Il dibattito sulla guerra*, Op. cit.; G. Haupt, *L'Internazionalismo socialista dalla Comune a Lenin*, Torino, 1978.

37 *Avanti!*, 27 aprile 1914.

38 *Bandiera Rossa*, cit..

39 C. Treves, «Guerra al regno della guerra», *Il Riscatto*, Op. cit.; «Verso il Congresso di Ancona...», *Avanti!*, 1 aprile 1914, Op. cit..

40 *Ibid*..

41 P. Mantica, «Un nuovo obiettivo», *L'Internazionale*, 1° Maggio 1914.

42 F. Pedone, Op. cit., p. 429.

43 «La gloriosa manifestazione... Mantova», *Avanti!*, 3 maggio 1914.

44 «L'imponente comizio di protesta ad Occhiobello», *Avanti!*, 5 maggio 1914.

45 *La Patria*: La patria non so cosa sia / I know not what the fatherland be; Quando ne la stamberga / when in the hovel / il vento avventa l'urlo suo / the wind blows its cry / che assidera e tormenta / which freezes and torments / oh! dite allor / Oh! Tell me then where be / dov'è la patria mia / the fatherland belonging to me; *L'Avanguardia!*, 1° maggio 1914.

46 Voluminous documentation regarding May Day celebrations may be found in newspaper articles. An overall picture is provided by *Avanti!*, which published reports from all over Italy. Every socialist publication, however, whether at a local, provincial or regional level, reported on the festival. Reports from *Avanti!* have mainly been used in the preparation of this work. News reports from *Internazionale*, *Il Grido del Popolo*, *L'Avanguardia*, *La Regione*, have also been consulted.

47 *Cronaca di Milano. Calendimaggio rosso a Milano*, *Avanti!*, 3 maggio 1914.

48 F. Carboni, *Op. cit.*, p. 21.

49 «La grandiosa manifestazione proletaria», *Avanti!*, 3 maggio 1914.

50 «Al di là del confine. Il Primo Maggio all'estero», *La Difesa delle lavoratrici*, 1 maggio 1915. This is a passage from an article of Clara Zetkin, published in the German socialist women's newspaper, reprinted in *La Difesa*.

51 M. Dommanget, *Histoire du Premier Mai*, 1972, p. 259. Massara, Schirinzi, Sioli, *Storia del Primo Maggio*, Milano, 1978, p. 131.

52 Massara, Schirinzi, Sioli, *Op. cit.*, p. 129. See also *Rapports des pays belligérants — L'Allemagne, commission socialiste internationale à Berne, Bulletin*, n.2, pp. 2-3.

53 A. Rosmer, *Il movimento operaio alle porte della prima guerra mondiale*, Milano, 1979, pp. 91-242. See also *La conference de Zimmerwald et le mouvement ouvrier en France, Bulletin*, cit., pp. 3-4.

54 A. Rosmer, *Op. cit.*, pp. 259-262; A. Dommanget, *Op. cit.*, p. 261-262.

55 A. Rosmer, *Op. cit.*, pp. 233-234.

56 A. Dommanget, *Op. cit.*, p. 260.

57 *Rapport sur l'activité du C.C. du parti social-démocrate russe pendant la guerre, Bulletin*, cit., pp. 7-8.

58 *Rapport sur l'activité du C.C. du parti social-démocrate de la Russie*, *ivi*, pp. 6-7.

59 *L'union général des ouvriers socialistes israélites e la guerre, Bulletin*, cit., p. 9.

60 In Switzerland, where the socialist party guided by R. Grimm is at the forefront in mending the International network, together with the Italian party, participation in public demonstrations and marches took place. *Avanti!*, 3 maggio 1915; Massara, Schirinzi, Sioli, *Op. cit.*, p. 130; Dommanget, *Op. cit.*, pp. 262-263.

61 B. Vigezzi, *L'Italia di fronte alla prima guerra mondiale*, Milano-Napoli, 1966.

62 For the history of Italian socialism in the period of neutrality, other than the volume of Vigezzi, cited above, see: R. De Felice, *Mussolini il rivoluzionario, 1883-1920*, Torino, 1965, pp. 221-320. L. Valiani, *Il partito socialista italiano nel periodo della neutralità, 1914-1915*, Milano, 1948; L. Ambrosoli, *Né aderire né sabotare, 1915-18*, Milano, 1916; G. Arfé, *Storia del socialismo italiano, 1892-1926*, Torino, pp. 201-211; G. Volpe, *Il popolo italiano tra la guerra e la pace*, Milano, 1948. M. Degl'Innocenti, *Il socialismo italiano di fronte alla prima guerra mondiale*, various authors, *Storia del partito socialista. Dalle origini all'avvento del fascismo*, Venezia, 1979. S. Caretti, *I socialisti e la grande guerra (1914-1918)*, various authors, *Storia del socialismo italiano*, Roma, 1980, vol. III. See also *Il Psi e la grande guerra, Rivista storica del socialismo*, n. 32, particularly the contributions of Luigi Cortesi, Orietta Lupo, Fabio Fabbri.

63 «Festa senza clamore», *Avanti!*, 1 maggio 1915.

64 A. Magnani, *Contro il militarismo*, *L'Avanguardia*, 1 maggio 1915.

65 *Il Pensiero libertario*, 1 maggio 1915.

- 66 «L'ironia di una data», *L'Internazionale*, 1 maggio 1915.
- 67 R. De Felice, *Op. cit.*, pp. 234-237. *Sindacalismo rivoluzionario e fiumanesimo nel carteggio De Ambris-D'Annunzio*, Brescia, 1966. O. Lupo, *I sindacalisti rivoluzionari nel 1914*, in «Psi e la grande guerra», *Rivista storica del socialismo*, cit., pp. 69-82.
- 68 «Confronti storici. In memoria della "Semaine sanglante"», *L'Internazionale*, periodico di propaganda e di azione sindacale, 1 maggio 1915.
- 69 T. Elia, «L'Internazionale è morta? (Lettera aperta a Gustavo Hervé)», *L'Internazionale*, 8 maggio 1915.
- 70 «Cronaca della città e della provincia», *L'Internazionale*, edizione per la provincia di Roma, 1 maggio 1915.
- 71 C. Treves, «Maggio nel sangue», *Critica sociale*, 1-15 maggio 1915.
- 72 For the attitude of Treves to the intervention and war problem, see A. Riosa, *Treves e la grande guerra*, M. Degl'Innocenti, ed., *Filippo Turati e il socialismo europeo*, Napoli, 1985, pp. 317-319; A. Casali, *Socialismo e internazionalismo nella storia d'Italia*, op. cit., pp. 73-99.
- 73 C. Treves, «Maggio nel sangue», *Op. cit.*.
- 74 C. Treves, S. Fasulo, *Il problema degli armamenti e il congresso di Ancona*, *Op. cit.*.
- 75 C. Treves, «Maggio nel sangue», *Op. Cit.*.
- 76 «International organisation must no longer be understood to be what it was until now: the superficial exchange of compliments, the occasional hour-long show of solidarity. Full meaning must be given to the workers' International: it must become a daily struggle, without truces, across all frontiers, against militarism... patriotism... capitalism... This is the today's teaching». Untitled article in *Primo Maggio*, illustrated supplement to *Avanti!*, p. 2.
- 77 F. Andreucci, T. Detti, *Il movimento operaio italiano. Dizionario biografico*, Roma, 1975, pp. 164-167.
- 78 N. Barbato, «L'idea di patria e il socialismo», *Avanti!*, 3 maggio 1915. For Barbato's participation in Candia's struggle see G. Oliva, «Illusioni e disillusioni nella guerra greco-turca del 1897», *Movimento operaio e socialista*, 1982, n. 3, pp. 350-365.
- 79 N. Barbato, *Op. cit.*.
- 80 *Ibid.*.
- 81 F. Andreucci, T. Detti, *Il movimento...*, *Op. cit.*, pp. 362-366.
- 82 R. Roberto, «I senza patria», *Avanti!*, 1 maggio 1915.
- 83 These themes are particularly found in socialist peasant publications, especially in Southern Italy. See the May Day issue of *La Ragione* and *Il Randello*.
- 84 R. Roberto, *Op. cit.*.
- 85 F. Andreucci, T. Detti, *Il movimento...*, *Op. cit.*, pp. 505-509.
- 86 A. Caroti, «Dopo la guerra», *Avanti!*, 30 aprile 1915.
- 87 *Ibid.*.
- 88 *Avanti!* in a column entitled «La preparazione socialista del Primo Maggio», reported in the final days of April an intense fervour of activity, often initiated at a committee level. See *Avanti!* 27-28-29-30 aprile 1915.
- 89 «Nelle città principali, grande manifestazione antiguerrasca e antidinaistica a Torino», *Avanti!*, 3 maggio 1915; «Corrispondenza e propaganda. Echi di 1° Maggio da Torino», *La Difesa delle lavoratrici*, 1 maggio 1915. P. Spriano, *Torino operaia nella grande guerra*, Torino, 1966, pp. 79-116. Massara, Schirinzi, Sioli, *Op. cit.*, p. 126.

90 «Nelle città principali...», *Op. cit.*. The violent anti-war change of this May Day manifested itself again a few days later in other anti-war protests. Massara, *Op. Cit.*, p. 127. P. Spriano, *Op. cit.*, pp. 92-116.

91 «Nelle città principali — Bologna e provincia», *Avanti!*, 3 maggio 1915.

92 The presence of women and children in May Day celebrations was a sign of the involvement of whole families of workers. Confirmation of this presence is found in numerous newspaper articles. «La volontà di pace dei lavoratori italiani nei comizi di Primo Maggio, Vaiano», 3 maggio 1915. «Cronaca di Milano. Gruppo femminile socialista», *Avanti!*, 1 maggio 1915.

93 Socialist city governments participated in very active ways in the celebrations. Often they took the opportunity to close primary schools, to raise the flag to participate in the marches with flags and banners or to organise and subsidize public buffets. «Manifestazioni in tutta Italia. Balsamo», *Avanti!*, 3 maggio 1915.

94 «Nelle città principali — Bologna e provincia», *Op. cit.*.

95 See the news pages of *Avanti!* during the first days of May.

96 *Avanti!*, 3 maggio 1915, p. 2.

97 «Manifestazioni in tutta Italia: Torre Annunziata», *Avanti!*, 3 maggio 1915.

98 L. Ambrosoli, *Op. cit.*.

99 See the news reports in the early May issues of *La Ragione* and *Il Randello*. For the political and social context in which this May Day was celebrated, see: F. Giagnotti, *Socialismo e guerra nazionale. Il dibattito sull'intervento del movimento socialista di Terra di Bari*, various authors, *Il movimento socialista e popolare in Puglia dalle origini alla Costituzione, 1874-1946*, Bari, 1985, pp. 121-147.

100 Political meetings were often tense and numerous incidents occurred. Porto Maurizio, Novi Ligure, Piacenza, Ferrara, Matelica, Padua, Foiano, *Avanti!*, 27-30 aprile 1915; 3-5 maggio 1915.

101 At Soresina, clashes between anti-war socialists and catholics, followers of the Hon. M.P. Migloli took place. «Tumulti, fermenti, arresti e sciopero generale a Soresina», *Avanti!*, 3 maggio 1915. Incidents also occurred at Iesi and Viganello: *Avanti!*, 1-3 maggio 1915.

102 «Cronaca di Milano. Il Primo Maggio a Milano. Il grande comizio al Teatro del Popolo», *Avanti!*, 3 maggio 1915.

103 «Cronaca di Milano. Il comizio sindacalista», *Avanti!*, 3 maggio 1915.

104 *Avanti!*, 27-29 aprile 1915; 3 maggio 1915. Telegram of the Police Commissioner (Questore) to the Milan Prefect dated 30 aprile 1915, State Archives of Milan (ASM) p. 465.

105 «L'imponente manifestazione proletaria del Primo Maggio. Per la libertà, per il socialismo, contro la guerra», *Avanti!*, 3 maggio 1915.

106 «Il Primo Maggio», *La Lotta*, special issue edited by the socialist federation and the Polesine Camera del Lavoro, II edition, 1 Maggio 1916.

107 «Vita del partito. Per il 1° Maggio 1916», Statement of the Executive Board, *Avanti!*, 15 aprile 1916.

108 *Lotta Operaia*, special issue of the Sestri Ponente Camera del Lavoro, 1° maggio 1916.

109 «1° Maggio», *Il Litografo*, 1 Maggio 1916, censored article. On the contrast between past and present, see also «Primo Maggio di sangue», *La squilla socialista*, special issue for May Day 1916, Novi Ligure.

110 M. Faedi, *Primo Maggio 1916, La difesa delle lavoratrici*. See also E. Taranini, «Maggio di sangue», *La Ragione*, 1 maggio 1916.

- 111 M. Giudice, *Calendimaggio di sangue, Il grido del popolo*, 1° Maggio 1916.
- 112 E. Leed, *Terra di nessuno*, Bologna, 1985 e C. Fussell, *La grande guerra e la memoria moderna*, Bologna, 1984.
- 113 V. Foa, *Operai e governo in Gran Bretagna*; G. Procacci ed., *Stato e classe operaia in Italia durante la prima guerra mondiale*, 1983, pp. 312-313.
- 114 A. Rosmer, *Il movimento operaio durante la prima guerra mondiale*, Milano, 1977, vol. II, p. 79, V. Foa, *Op. cit.*, p. 317.
- 115 J.J. Becker, *Dalla sorpresa alla protesta: le classi popolari francesi di fronte alla guerra (1914-1918)*; Various authors, *La guerra vissuta. Fronte, fronte interno e società, Movimento operaio e socialista*, 1982, n. 3, pp. 387-389.
- 116 A. Rosmer, *Op. cit.*, pp. 29-32; 80-83. For living conditions in France during the Great War, see *Les Français dans la grande guerre*, Paris, 1980. 1914-1918. *L'autre front, cahier du mouvement social*, 1977, n. 2. For the industrial transformation caused by the war, see P. Dogliani, *Guerra e mobilitazione industriale in Francia*, in G. Procacci, ed., *Op.cit.*, pp.332-340.
- 117 The discontent arising from the escalating cost of living in Berlin in 1916 was the subject of Italian press reports as well. «Sintomi», *Il grido del popolo*, 1 maggio 1916.
- 118 R. Monteleone, *Classe operaia e lotta di classe in Austria*, in G. Procacci, ed., *Op. cit.*, p. 329.
- 119 B. Vigezzi, *Op. cit.*; R. De Felice, *Mussolini il rivoluzionario*, cit., pp. 221-314. L. Ambrosoli, *Op. cit.*; G. Arfé, *Storia del socialismo italiano, 1892-1926*, cit., pp. 186-212; S. Caretti, *I socialisti e la grande guerra, 1914-1918*, cit., pp. 22-36; G. Volpe, *Il popolo italiano tra la pace e la guerra*, cit.
- 120 P. Melograni, *Storia politica della grande guerra*, Bari 1977, pp. 43-45.
- 121 B. Vigezzi, «Le "radiose giornate" del maggio 1915 nei rapporti dei prefetti», *Nuova rivista storica*, sett. dic. 1959; genn. aprile 1960. P. Melograni, *Op. cit.*, p. 3-13. «La dimostrazione per la partenza del 14° fanteria», *Il Randello*, 23 maggio 1914.
- 122 A vast collection of historiographical writings on the popular opposition to war, both at the front and at home, now exists, from the classic and ever valid *Storia politica della grande guerra*, by Pietro Melograni to the works of Monticone, Isnenghi, Monteleone, Rochat and Procacci which have offered a different «reading» not only of the popular dissent but also of the war as a total phenomenon. We thus limit our references here to a general review of the works of the above writers.
- 123 G. Procacci, «Repressione e dissenso nella prima guerra mondiale», *Studi storici*, 1981, n. 1, pp. 122-130. Id., *La legislazione repressiva e la sua applicazione, Stato e classe operaia...*, cit., pp. 41-59; pp. 15-25.
- 124 «Viva la nostra Camera del Lavoro», *Lotta operaia, Camera del Lavoro di Sestri Ponente, numero unico*, 1 Maggio 1916.
- 125 «Dalla Liguria rivoluzionaria», *Ibid.*.
- 126 «Riorganizzazione del movimento nel Polesine. Congresso delle leghe», *La Lotta*, special issue edited by the socialist federation and the Polesine Camera del Lavoro, 1 maggio 1916; «Minervino Murge, Per il risveglio proletario e la riorganizzazione della CdL. La Manifestazione e il convegno camerale del 1° Maggio». «Cronache pugliesi, Lecce, Costituzione del circolo giovanile socialista Castellana». «Per il 1° Maggio, Inaugurazione del circolo giovanile F. Ferrer», *La Ragione*, 1 maggio 1916.
- 127 V. Foa, *Sindacati e lotte sociali, Storia d'Italia, I documenti*, Torino, 1973, vol. II, p. 1806.

128 For the international activity of Italian socialists from the beginnings of the war to Kienthal see E. Ragionieri, *La terza Internazionale e il partito comunista italiano*, Torino, 1978, pp. 79-119; A. Balabanoff, *La mia vita di rivoluzionaria*, Milano, 1979. L. Ambrosoli, *Né aderire, né sabotare*, *Op. cit.*, pp. 103-139; A. Rosmer, *Op. cit.*, vol. I, pp. 181-185; 369-371; 391-392; vol. II, pp. 99-107. G. Calciano, «Apunti e documenti sull'attività internazionale di Oddino Morgari», *Rivista storica del socialismo*, n. 32, pp. 155-191. On internationalist minorities from Zimmerwald to Kienthal, see «Rapports des pays belligérants», in the *Bullettin of the Commission socialiste internationale a Berne*, Berne, n.1-5; M. Fainsod, *International socialism and the world war*, Cambridge, 1935.

129 A. Balabanoff, *Op. cit.*, p. 117.

130 *Commission socialiste internationale à Berne. Seconde conférence socialiste internationale de Zimmerwald. Aux peuples qu'on ruine et qu'on tue. Bulletin n.5.*

131 Massara, Schirinzi, Sioli, *Op. cit.*, pp. 134-137. M. Dommanget, *Op. cit.*, pp. 266-267. Genosse, (*Gustavo sacerdote*), «In Germania», *Avanti!*, 3 maggio 1916.

132 A. Rosmer, *Op. cit.*, p. 264.

133 On the pacifist and internationalist minority within the French Socialist Party, see A. Rosmer, *Op. cit.*, vol. II, pp. 57-69.

134 M. Dommanget, *Op. cit.*, p. 265.

135 Genosse, «All'estero. In Austria», *Avanti!*, 3 maggio 1916. M. Dommanget, *Op. cit.*, p. 266.

136 «All'estero. In Svizzera», *Ibid.*.

137 Copies of these leaflets can be found in the *Memoirs of B. Dvinov*, New York, 1962, p. 136; M. Dommanget, *Op. cit.*, p. 268.

138 Massara, Schirinzi, Sioli, *Op. cit.*, p.132.

139 M. Dommanget, *Op. cit.*, p. 265.

140 «Vita del partito. Per il 1° Maggio 1916». Statement of the Executive Board of the Party, *Avanti!*, 15 aprile 1916.

141 Party militants responded to the prohibition to post the poster issued by the Executive and by the provincial federations by reproducing its contents in leaflets and distributing them during the demonstrations.

142 A. Rosmer, *Op. cit.*, p. 136. Massara, Schirinzi, Sioli, *Op. cit.*, p. 137.

143 «Per il 1° Maggio 1916...», *Op. cit.*, *Avanti!*, 1 maggio 1916.

144 «Apostoli e combattenti dell'Internazionale socialista», *Avanti!*, 1 May 1916.

145 «La manifestazione del Primo Maggio in Italia», *Avanti!*, 3 maggio 1914; «Le manifestazioni di Primo Maggio in Italia», *ivi*, 4 maggio 1916; see also the issues of 5 and 6-7 May.

146 «La manifestazione di Primo Maggio in Italia», Sestri Ponente, Novara, Volterra, Spezia, Foligno, Prato, Ponticelli, Chieti, Fabriano, *Avanti!*, 3-4-5-6-7 maggio 1916.

147 By mid-April the amount collected by *Avanti!* towards the total subscription was approximately 24,000 lire. The total collected by the end of May had almost doubled. The matter is also reported in A. Rosmer, *Op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 101.

148 «Almost complete» observance in Santhià, Tortona, Spezia, Molfetta, Polesine, *Avanti!*, 3 maggio 1916.

149 «Complete» observance in Novara, Busto Arsizio, Varese, Bologna, Ferrara, Torre Annunziata, Iesi, Foligno, Fontanelli, Pisa, Vidallugo, Turin and in scores of large and small cities. *Avanti!*, 3-4-5-6-7 maggio 1915, *Il grido del popolo*, Torino, 6 maggio 1916, *La Ragione*, 1 maggio 1916, *Il grido del popolo*, Taranto, 27 maggio

1916, *La donna socialista*, San Severo, 21 maggio 1916. In some cases, particularly in factories subject to industrial mobilisation, workers toiled on Sunday and participated in the celebrations on Monday, 1st May.

150 See the administrations of Bologna or of Greco Milanese, of San Severo, or Andria, *Avanti!*, 3 maggio 1916. *La donna socialista*, 21 maggio 1916.

151 «La manifestazione del Primo Maggio in Italia. In Emilia Romagna-Bologna», *Avanti!*, 3 maggio 1916.

152 *Avanti!*, 3 maggio 1916, *cit.*.

153 For the circulation of the Zimmerwald manifesto in Italy, the arrests and resulting court trials see L. Ambrosoli, *Op. cit.*, pp. 110-115. E. Ragionieri, *Op. cit.*, p. 115. A. Balabanoff, *Op. cit.*, p. 115. L. Cortesi, *Il socialismo italiano tra riforme e rivoluzioni*, Bari, 1969, p. 630. P. Spriano, *Torino operaia nella grande guerra 1914-1918*, Torino, 1960, pp. 127-130. A. Riosa, *Il partito socialista italiano dal 1892 al 1918*, Bologna, 1969, pp. 188-193.

154 See the observations of Ragionieri on the character of such information. E. Ragionieri, *Op. cit.*, pp. 105-107.

155 Gallen, «Per l'avvenire dell'Internazionale», *Avanti!*, 23 aprile 1916.

156 *Ibid.*

157 For the attitudes of Italian socialism towards Khiental, see L. Ambrosoli, *Op. cit.*, pp. 125-139. E. Ragionieri, *Op. cit.*, pp. 102-105; P. Spriano, *Op. cit.*, pp. 160-161; A. Balabanoff, *Op. cit.*, pp. 116-117; G. Arfé, *Op. cit.*, pp. 222-223; see also A. Rosmer, *Op. cit.*, vol. II, pp. 102-103; L. Cortesi, *Op. cit.*, pp. 630-632.

158. «Zimmerwald», *La Lotta*, 1 maggio 1916.

159 «Even in midst of the storm other hearts, beyond national boundaries, beat like ours. Russian socialists, the main currents of English socialism, Swiss, Balkan and far-away American socialists, and strong socialist minorities in Germany and France are with us Italians», *La squilla socialista*, 1° Maggio 1916.

160 C. Treves, «Questo Primo Maggio» (written on the eve of May Day), *Critica sociale*, 1-15 maggio 1916.

161 F. Turati, «Se fossimo pronti!», *Avanti!*, 1 maggio 1916.

162 «Avanti! Con immutata fede», *Avanti!*, 1 maggio 1916.

163 Numerous expressions of praise and approval of Morgari's and the party Executive's activities appear amongst the pro-*Avanti!* subscriptions made during the first months of the war. Such activities culminated in the call for the Lugano conference, in the Bern meeting and, finally, in the Zimmerwald international conference.

164 As E. Ragionieri states, at the beginning of 1916, Lenin and his «thesis on the war» were almost completely unknown to the majority of Italian socialists. E. Ragionieri, *Op. cit.*, p. 104.

165 «Sottoscrizioni permanenti pro-Avanti!», (from Florence), *Avanti!*, 26 aprile. The reference of the unity of all revolutionaries most probably refers to the debate between Zibordi and *Avanti!* on the policy to adopt towards the anarchists and the neutralist syndicalists, a debate which took place in April on the columns of the newspaper and in which Bordiga participated as well. See in this regard A. Rosmer, *Op. cit.*, pp. 104-106.

166 «Unione sindacale italiana, compagni», *L'Avanguardia*, 1 maggio 1916.

167 The subscription bears the signatures of a group of Milanese workers. *Avanti!*, 11 maggio 1916.

168 See E. Ragionieri, *Op. cit.*, pp. 99-102; pp. 109-112; L. Cortesi, *Op. cit.*, pp. 614-632; G. Gozzini, *Alle origini del comunismo italiano. Storia della federa-*

zione giovanile socialista, 1907-1921, Bari, 1979, P. Spriano, *Op. cit.*, pp. 116-137; L. Ambrosoli, *Op. cit.*, p. 128.

169 E. Ragionieri, *Op. cit.*, pp. 114-115.

170 A copy of the leaflet can be found in the State Archives of Milan (hereafter referred to as «ASM»). *Carte del gabinetto del prefetto*, b. 469.

171 *Service order n. 4809 to commissioners, police stations, delegates, branches, guard posts, and police within and outside the Kingdom. La questura ASM, ibid., Il popolo d'Italia*, 17-27 Aprile 1916.

172 «Cronaca di Milano. La manifestazione di domani», *Avanti!*, 1 maggio 1916. *Telegram of the Acting Police Commissioner to the Civil Affairs Commissioner of the Province of Milan dated 26 aprile 1916 ASM, gab. pref.*, b 469.

173 *Telegram...*, *cit.*.

174 «Una protesta idiota», *Avanti!*, 3* aprile 1916.

175 *Telegram of the Police Commissioner to the Prefect (provincial administrator) 1 maggio 1916; sound record of the Divisional Commander to the Civil Affairs Commissioner and to the Person-in-Charge, police-station 2 May 1916. ASM gab. perf.*, b 469.

176 *Fonogramma...*, *cit.*.

177 *Telegrams of the Police Commissioner to the Prefect (provincial administrator) and from the Prefect to the Police Commissioner dated 30 april 1916, ASM gab. pref.*, b 469.

178 *Avanti!*, 4 maggio 1916. Turati filed a parliamentary question about the incident. In a report to Salandra on 6 May the Commissioner of Civil Affairs of Milan referred to a discussion which took place with Mayor Caldara concerning the very same protest of Turati in the town council. The Commissioner expressed to the Mayor his own amazement at Turati's defence of the city government's poster extolling the International at the very moment in which the socialist leader in an article in the May Day issue of *Avanti!*, had spoken of the «bankruptcy» of the International in the hands of the same socialists. Calandra explained Turati's behavior distinguishing between «a formal International and an ideal International», arousing the functionary's sceptical irony. *Il commissario civile a S.E. il presidente del consiglio dei ministri*, 6 maggio 1916, *ASM gab. pref.*, b. 575.

179 P. Spriano, *Op. cit.*, p. 134.

180 *Ibid.*, pp. 116-127.

181 «La manifestazione del 1° Maggio a Torino», *Il grido del popolo*, 6 maggio 1916. *Avanti!*, 3 maggio 1915, P. Spriano, *Op. cit.*, pp. 135-136; Massara, Schirinzi, Sioli, *Op. cit.*, pp. 138-139.

182 The small group is forced to stroll so as to avoid the formation of «assemblages». *Il grido del popolo*, *cit.*.

183 «1° Maggio berlinesse, Liebknecht è stato arrestato», *Il grido del popolo*, 6 maggio 1916.

184 I was able to track down a copy of the colour postcard, by the Neapolitan, artist G. Pisacane, at the State Archives of Milan. The postcard was sent anonymously to the Commissioner for Civil Affairs of Milan. *ASM gab. pref.*, b. 575.

185 The medal is by Sante Callegari of Sermide, *Avanti!*, 1 Maggio 1916.

186 Underneath the sketch, is the caption: «Il morto il vivo», *Avanti!*, 1 maggio 1916.

187 A large number of the pro-*Avanti!* subscriptions were given in memory of the fallen or in solidarity with the soldiers and their families. Even the sixth page

of the May Day issue of *Avanti!* is full of such greetings. Very frequent are the memorials and expressions of solidarity in the special issues.

- 188 « Ricordano », *L'Avanguardia*, 1 maggio 1916.
- 189 « Il Primo Maggio », *La Lotta*, 1 maggio 1916.
- 190 A. Rosmer, *Op. cit.*, vol. II, pp. 161-162.
- 191 G. Badia, *Il movimento spartachista*, Roma, 1970, pp. 91-95.
- 192 M. Fainsod, *International Socialism and the World War*, Cambridge, 1935, p. 109; A. Rosmer, *Op. cit.*, vol II, pp. 281-287; L. Ambrosoli, *Op. cit.*, p. 155.
- 193 M. Fainsod, *Op. cit.*, pp. 114-119; A. Rosmer, *Op. cit.*, vol. II, pp. 263-281; 289-314.
- 194 G. Badia, *Op. cit.*, p. 102; M. Fainsod, *Op. cit.*, p. 109.
- 195 M. Fainsod, *Op. cit.*, pp. 98-123; G. Badia, *Op. cit.*, pp. 98-104.
- 196 G. Badia, *Op. cit.*, pp. 105-107; R. Monteleone, *Classe operaia e lotta di classe in Austria*, *op. cit.*, p. 330.
- 197 M. Dommagnet, *Op. cit.*, p. 268.
- 198 *Ibid.*, p. 271.
- 199 Massara, Schirinzi, Sioli, *Op. cit.*, pp. 139-142; M. Dommagnet, *Op. cit.*, pp. 268-271.
- 200 Massara ..., *Op. cit.*, pp. 142-143; M. Dommagnet, *Op. cit.*, pp. 271-273; « All'estero », *Avanti!*, 3 maggio 1917.
- 201 R. De Felice, « Ordine pubblico e orientamenti delle masse popolari italiane nella prima metà del 1917 », *Rivista storica del socialismo*, 1963, n. 20, pp. 467-504; G. Procacci, « Repressione e dissenso nella prima guerra mondiale », *Studi storici*, 1981, pp. 131-150; N. De Stefano, « Moti popolari in Emilia Romagna e Toscana 1915-1917 », *Rivista storica del socialismo*, n. 32, pp. 200-216; L. Tomasini, « Classe operaia e sindacato durante la prima guerra mondiale: la CdL di Firenze, 1915-1918 », *Ricerche storiche*, 1979, n. 2-3, pp. 259-374; D. Bigazzi, *I più turbolenti della città, La composizione operaia all'Alfa Romeo (1915-1918)*; G. Procacci, ed., *Stato e classe operaia*, *Op. cit.*, pp. 268-287; P. Spriano, *Op. cit.*, pp. 161 ss; P. Melogani, *Op. cit.*, pp. 329-333.
- 202 L. Ambrosoli, *Op. cit.*, pp. 141-188; M. Malatesta, *I socialisti italiani durante la grande guerra*, Milano, 1926, pp. 105-137; S. Caretti, *Op. cit.*, pp. 69-75; G. Arfé, *Op. cit.*, pp. 224-238.
- 203 A. Riosa, *Treves e la grande guerra*; M. Degl'Innocenti, ed., *Filippo Turati e il socialismo europeo*, Napoli, 1985, pp. 335-341; A. Casali, *Socialismo ed internazionalismo...*, *Op. cit.*, pp. 83-84; B. Tobia, « Il partito socialista italiano e la politica di W. Wilson », *Storia contemporanea*, 1974, n. 2, pp. 275-290.
- 204 L. Cortesi, *Op. cit.*, pp. 631-634; L. Ambrosoli, *Op. cit.*, pp. 175-178; A. Malatesta, *Op. cit.*, pp. 131-137.
- 205 « Unione sindacale milanese, Primo Maggio 1917 », *Internazionale*, weekly periodical of syndacalst propaganda and action, organ of Unione Sindacale Milanese and of the Camera del Lavoro of Parma and Province, 1 Maggio 1917.
- 206 A. De Ambris, « Un simbolo esaurito », *L'Internazionale*, 26 maggio 1917.
- 207 R. De Felice, *Sindacalismo rivoluzionario e fiumanesimo*, *Op. cit.*, pp. 48-49 *Id.*, R. De Felice, *Mussolini il rivoluzionario*, *Op. cit.*, pp. 346-352. C. Treves, « 1° Maggio », *Critica Sociale*, 1-15 maggio 1917, pp. 121-122; F. Turati, « Verso albe nuove... », *ivi*, pp. 123-126.
- 208 C. Treves, *Op. cit.*.
- 209 *Ibid.*.

- 210 *Ibid.*.
- 211 B. Tobia, *Op. cit.*.
- 212 F. Turati, *Op. cit.*, p. 125.
- 213 *Ibid.*.
- 214 A. Casali, *Op. cit.*, p. 87; A. Riosa, «I riformisti e l'incendio del 1917», *Avanti!*, 19 dicembre 1982; S. Caretti, *La rivoluzione russa e il socialismo italiano*, Pisa, 1974, pp. 25 ss; L. Cortesi, «Note sulle correnti del Psi nel 1917 di fronte alla rivoluzione russa», *Movimento operaio e socialista*, 1968, n. 3-4.
- 215 S. Caretti, *Op. cit.*, p. 40, nota n. 41.
- 216 *Ibid.*.
- 217 A. Schiavi, «Maggio russo», *Avanti!*, 1 maggio 1917; L. Cortesi, *Note sulle correnti del Psi...*, *Op. cit.*, p. 148.
- 218 This is the pseudonym with which V.V. Sukomlin signed his articles in *Avanti!*. S. Caretti, *Op. cit.*, p. 25.
- 219 Junior, «La dichiarazione dei diritti del soldato», *Avanti!*, 1 maggio 1917.
- 220 F. Turati, «Primo Maggio di raccoglimento», *Avanti!*, 1 maggio 1917.
- 221 «L'ammonimento di un maggio lontano», *ivi*.
- 222 E. Reclus, «La più grande nazione», *ivi*.
- 223 J. Mesnil, «Verso la nuova Internazionale», *ivi*. For the bibliography of Mesnil see J. Maitron, *Dictionnaire biographique du Mouvement ouvrier français*, vol. 12.
- 224 L. Cortesi, *Note sulle correnti del Psi...*, p. 148, *cit.*
- 225 «Dall'Internazionale. Russia, Germania, Austria-Ungheria, Bulgaria», *L'Avanguardia!*, 1° maggio 1917.
- 226 «Inchiniamo le rosse bandiere alla rivoluzione russa», *Il Grido del Popolo*, 29 aprile 1917.
- 227 «Berlino proletaria», *Il Grido del Popolo*, 5 maggio 1917.
- 228 «Lenin», *ivi*.
- 229 The newspaper also contains an article on the subject by the young Gramsci. A. Gramsci, «Note sulla rivoluzione russa», *Il Grido...*, 29 aprile 1917. For Gramsci's interpretation of the Russian events, see S. Caretti, *Op. cit.*, p. 62 ss; L. Cortesi, *Note...*, pp. 197-198.
- 230 The expression is taken from *Sempre! Almanacco di Guerra di Classe*, 1 Maggio 1917.
- 231 The bill-posting of this poster by the Executive and of numerous May Day posters printed by federations and local organization was in fact prohibited.
- 232 Junior, *La rivoluzione russa*, Editrice Avanti!, 1917. *Primo Maggio 1917*, Editrice Avanti!, 1917.
- 233 «La manifestazione di Primo Maggio, Terni, S. Quirico (Genova), Poggibonsi, Riva Trigoso», *Avanti!* 3, 4 maggio 1917. See, in this regard, the news reports of the demonstration in the issues of *Avanti* over the first days of May.
- 234 «La manifestazione di Primo Maggio, Iesi», *Avanti!*, 3 maggio 1917.
- 235 R. De Felice, *Op. cit.*, p. 475.
- 236 «Cronaca di Milano. Deliberazione di Giunta per il Primo Maggio», *Avanti!*, 21 aprile 1917.
- 237 «Cronaca di Milano. Camera del Lavoro. Per il Primo Maggio», *Avanti!*, 22 aprile 1917.
- 238 «Cronaca di Milano. Sezione socialista milanese. Primo Maggio. Federazione socialista. Primo Maggio», *Avanti!*, 21 aprile 1917.

- 239 See the letter of May 10 by F. Turati to A. Kuliscioff, in R. De Felice, *Op. cit.*, p. 275.
- 240 Turati refers also to the commitment to avoid all public demonstrations which he personally assumed with the Prefect. «Cronaca di Milano. La manifestazione di 1° Maggio. Migliaia di lavoratrici inneggiano all'Internazionale. Il Comizio della Casa del popolo», *Avanti!*, 3 maggio 1917.
- 241 *Ibid.*
- 242 R. De Felice, *Op. cit.*, p. 469.
- 243 N. De Stefano, *Op. cit.*, pp. 215-216. R. De Felice, *Op. cit.*, pp. 478-489.
- 244 E. Gennari, *1° Maggio 1898 — 1° Maggio 1917, Primo Maggio 1918*, Editrice Avanti, Milano 1918, pp. 15-17.
- 245 P. Spriano, *Op. cit.*, pp. 212-213, *Avanti!*, 3 maggio 1917.
- 246 S. Caretti, *Op. cit.*, p. 42; Gozzini, *Op. cit.*, pp. 58-62.
- 247 J.J. Becher, *Les Français dans la grande guerre*, *Op. cit.*, pp. 181-221.
- 248 G. Badia, *Op. cit.*, pp. 115-119; L. Valiani, *La dissoluzione dell'Austria-Ungheria*, Milano 1985, pp. 315-327.
- 249 See note 201.
- 250 P. Spriano, *Op. cit.*, pp. 235-255; A. Monticone, «Il socialismo torinese e i fatti dell'agosto 1917», *Rassegna storica del Risorgimento* gennaio - marzo, 1958; L. Ambrosoli, *Op. cit.*, pp. 231-237.
- 251 P. Spriano, *Op. cit.*, p. 259.
- 252 *Ibid.*, pp. 255-265; L. Ambrosoli, *Op. cit.*, pp. 242-243; S. Caretti, *Op. cit.*, p. 92-94; Id, *La rivoluzione russa...*, *Op. cit.*, pp. 83-85.
- 253 L. Ambrosoli, *Op. cit.*, pp. 238-248; L. Cortesi, *Il socialismo italiano...*, *Op. cit.*, pp. 238-244; S. Caretti, *La rivoluzione...*, *Op. cit.*, pp. 86-93; L. Cortesi, *Note...*, *Op. cit.*, pp. 174-175.
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- 299 With regard to the *metamorphoses* introduced by traumatic events, in this case the French Revolution, on ceremonies, see M. Vovelle, *La metamorfosi della festa, Provenza 1750 — 1820*, Bologna, 1986.
- 300 For the exchange of greetings, other than to the column *Saluti dal fronte*, we make general reference to the dedications which accompany, throughout the course of the war, the pro-*Avanti!* subscriptions of hundreds of militants and, naturally, to the news reports of the May Day gatherings.
- 301 The commemoration takes place during the speeches through the publication in the press of photographs with dedications or through simple death notices. See also the official commemoration made by Turati in August 1916 to the Casa del Popolo of Milan. F. Turati, *I nostri morti*, Editrice Avanti, 1916.